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Re-Oriented Britain – How British Asian Travellers and Settlers have Utilised and Reversed Orientalist Discourse 1770-2010

By

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Declaration

I declare that the research presented in this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

Beginning with Edward Said's seminal text, I will question the assumption of Orientalism as a universal and didactic discourse that was conducted exclusively from the West to and for the East. Said's overarching condemnation of Orientalism as an exclusively Western hegemonic structure overlooks the paradigm that Indians were not just collaborative producers of the Orientalist text but selective readers as well. I will argue that the contribution made by the influx of colonised people from the periphery to the colonial centre from the eighteenth century onwards has historically been overlooked.

Indian Orientalisms developed along their own particular axes by both utilising and reversing Orientalisms. Through this discursive utilisation, Indians were able to formulate responses to the dominant ideologies of Orientalism and as a consequence created new forms of discourse, both literary and historical. My thesis aims to illustrate that Indians, both in the colony and the metropole, were active and not passive agents in their negotiations of colonial as well as post-colonial space. This legacy needs to be recognised, as it continues to resonate and pose questions in contemporary times where the success of multicultural states in an increasingly globalised world is of paramount importance.

Generically, I have adopted non-fiction as the best form in which to convey these hidden histories. Autobiographies, diaries, letters, memoirs and travelogues establish the fluidity and imaginative endeavour that existed between the colony and the metropole. These historical documents illuminate a deeply contested colonial and post-colonial world, where colony became home and home could become the colony. Ultimately, this project aims to identify the Orient within Britain itself and also argue that Indian travellers and settlers have engaged in similar 'Orientalising' projects to render Britain intelligible for the Oriental mind, in ways that deconstruct the conventional Orientalist power relations associated with not only the high colonial period but also the pre and post colonial eras.

Introduction

Orientalism and its Reversal

What is Orientalism? When one is considering this question it is necessary to locate its inception within the panorama of world history. This location has been deeply contested by a variety of scholars, each with their own subjective leanings. However, in my appraisal of the dynamics of Orientalism in both the East and the West, I will be using Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) as my central reference point. Said's view is in itself problematic as he consistently states that Orientalism as a 'textual attitude' can be traced back to antiquity; to the world of Aeschylus and Homer in ancient Greece, where the Orient was first framed as something 'other' in classics such as *The Iliad* and *The Persians*. However, the main focus of his attack on Orientalism is shaped around the surge of colonialism and imperialism that drove Western Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with Britain and its scholars such as William Jones and James Mill as influential actors. Though much of Said's text concentrates on the Middle East, he proposes that his thesis is applicable to the entire Orient, with India in his summation being very much a conquered terrain on the Orientalist map. This poses the question; how can India be framed within Said's definition of Orientalism? Were Indians able to formulate responses to the dominant ideologies of Orientalism or were they passive subjects, powerless in the dialectics of imperialism? Were they able to challenge its parameters within the imperial centre? And finally, to what extent was Britain Orientalised by their presence? My study proposes to answer all these questions by

showcasing the manner in which Orientalist discourse could be co-opted into within India by Orientals. Also, Orientalism was not just a masculine project because women were also active readers, producers and contributors to the Orientalist text and reverse Orientalist response. The travellers, settlers and writers my study foregrounds also demonstrate that the discursive frameworks Saidian Orientalism extrapolates could also be used at cultural, local and social levels within Britain by Indian migrants to create new forms of Britishness and subsequently 'Orientalise' Britain at those micro levels.

Orientalism Theory

In his detailed study, Said identifies two main definitions of the Orient, both of which are interrelated. First, is that the Orient is always construed as ‘the Other’ and that it also represents a historical process, a discourse embedded at the heart of European culture and its own development:

In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience ... The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.¹

This definition of the Orient inevitably leads us onto the question, what does Said define as Orientalism? The primary definition he offers is that it figures as an academic institution, a label emplaced upon ‘anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient -- and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist.’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 3) With this definition in relation to an Indian context, Said identifies a variety of British scholars who were based both in India and Europe, including such luminaries as William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Max Muller and Anglicists such as Charles Grant and James Mill.

Said goes on to state that Orientalism also presents a definition of Europe itself, as ‘a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident.”’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 2) Paradigmatically the Orient exists as an inferiorised Other, lower down the evolutionary chain, in need of the West to mould and sustain it. Benita Parry states that early British Orientalists ‘saw in India vestiges of a primordial, dark

and instinctual past which their own society had left behind in its evolution.’² Parry places this gap firmly within the British imagination, arguing that for Orientalists it was inherently convenient to place Indians within the past tense of civilisation, as this inevitably encouraged the need for a civilising process. In his essay on early ‘British-Indian Connections,’ P.J. Marshall reinforces this idea when he writes that ‘Britain’s national mission in India, increasingly defined in terms of bringing ‘improvement,’ rested on assumptions of Indian backwardness.’³ Thus, the third definition of Orientalism is a manifestation of this idiom, in that it is a ‘Western style for dominating, reconstructing and having authority over the Orient.’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 3) In this formulation Said co-opts Michel Foucault’s theory of discourse where the perceived connection between knowledge and power allowed the British Orientalists to create an imperial discourse where the West was able to manage and even produce Oriental terrains such as India.

Said’s formulations are much indebted to both Foucault’s work on discourse and Antonio Gramsci’s conception of cultural hegemony. In these connections Said emphasises the importance of Orientalism as a textual reality, a self-sustaining cycle that consistently regurgitates a certain type of knowledge about the Orient, a cycle which renders even the individuality of the author as secondary to its all-pervasive power:

Most important, such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (Said, *Orientalism*, 94)

In this paradigm Said deconstructs conventional Orientalist history; he states that everything thought and written about Oriental India could not be independent or

objective in any way. Far from it, Said asserts that all perceptions of the Orient in the West derive from a collective unconscious, a 'textual attitude' born out of a canonical inevitability, unchallenged in the mind of the Occident.

Said's definition of Orientalism is varied and malleable but its principal concern is the relation between power and knowledge, and how this relationship was derivative of the greater exercise of imperial expansion. He proclaims that Western empires such as Britain needed to construct a particular type of Orient/India, one that was curiously both fertile and infertile terrain in need of conquering, a process that didn't involve Indians themselves, an Orient that could be continually contained within its dominating frameworks. P.J Marshall would certainly corroborate this element of Said's thinking by pointing to the imperial scholarship that enveloped British India whilst under the stewardship of the East India Company:

Oriental scholarship with its grammars, dictionaries and translations of texts, particularly those deemed to be of legal significance, merged with the passion for the accumulation of exact knowledge about the company's territories and their peoples ... [In this] accumulation of knowledge Indians generally had either a sub-ordinate role or no role at all. Europeans were increasingly confident in their unaided capacity to know and explain India. (P.J Marshall, "British-Indian Connections," 54)

The dynamic of early Indian Orientalism was thus delineated along the lines of an unequal dialectic, where India had to be made sense of, its texts translated, its mysteries decoded for a colonial power steadfastly sure of its own superiority.

Within this paradigm the Orientalist gained his authority. Figures such as Henry Thomas Colebrooke, the philologist William Jones and the political theorist James Mill not only illuminated the Orient for Europe's eye, they actually reconstituted the Orient itself, a dynamic described by Said when he writes 'to reconstruct a dead or lost Oriental language meant ultimately to reconstruct a dead or

neglected Orient.’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 123) Jones was the first president of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, inaugurated in 1784. He was a romanticist and legal scholar who translated Sanskrit into English and thus incrementally contributed to knowledge regarding the Indo-Germanic family of languages. His translation of the *Vedas* was a typical example of this contribution; he highlighted not only India’s difference from the West but also its difference from itself. A glorious past of equality, philosophy and imagination had been allowed to descend into the inequalities of the caste system, poverty and patriarchy. It was these translations that led Said to define the Orientalist as a genuine ‘creator,’ because the ‘India’ that has been lost is the Western scholar’s loss. India is not allowed to define itself, it is deemed as unable to translate itself, and it needs to be given a voice by the Western scholar:

To believe that the Orient was created- or, as I call it, “Orientalised”- and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. (Said, *Orientalism*, 5)

This imaginative and collative (re)construction of the Orient is unequivocally linked to power relations according to Said.

This leads us to the question that if British Orientalism was indeed a mass framework of control, an empire dressed in despot’s clothing, whose greatest power was its intellectual authority, how was it able to sustain itself? This is where Said employs Gramsci’s ideas of cultural hegemony as a corollary of the way in which Orientalism as a discourse has been able to sustain itself as a domineering structure. Said states that this culture of thinking exists within civil society, not above or outside of it: ‘The influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other person’s works not

through domination but what Antonio Gramsci calls consent.’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 7)

This acquiescence subsequently leads to a presumed leadership on Oriental matters, a discursive precedence over any thought about the Orient. It is this unquestioned understanding that sustains the ‘cultural hegemony’ that Said says ‘gives Orientalism the durability and the strength’ to adapt to changing local/global conditions. (Said, *Orientalism*, 7) This dynamic is corroborated by the historian Ronald Inden in his book *Imagining India*:

Integral to the idea of ‘imperial formation’ is a notion of ‘imperial knowledges’. These are the universalizing discourses, the world-constituting cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies, produced in those complex polities at their upper reaches by those persons and institutions who claim to speak with authority. We should not make the mistake of seeing these knowledges as unitary and imposed by force by a ruler.⁴

Inden also defines Orientalism as a discourse disseminated by consent, penetrative because of its versatility and given its authority by the seal of colonial hierarchy. I would argue that this consent was by no means absolute, total or beyond reversal. Orientalism as a discourse could be reversed and this was evidenced by the hitherto neglected presence of Indian writers who travelled to Britain in the heyday of imperialism when the Orient was being constructed for the Western Imagination. The West was also being constructed within the minds of Indian travellers, writers and immigrants who ventured into the heart of the Occidental Empire.

The Orientalist Critique

The historian Bernard Lewis has been one famous critic of Said's *Orientalism*; he is actually figured as an Orientalist within Said's critique. *Orientalism* is lambasted by Lewis for being a polemical study that contains a litany of conceptual, factual, and methodological errors. Connections that Said makes between Orientalism and imperial power are particularly questioned by Lewis, whose conception of Orientalist scholarship is placed within humanist traditions and distinguished from imperialist ideology:

If the pursuit of power through knowledge is the only or even the prime motive, why did the study of Arabic and Islam begin in Europe centuries before the Muslim conquerors were driven from Eastern and Western European soil and the Europeans embarked on their counter-attack? Why did these studies flourish in European countries that never had any share in the domination of the Arab world, and yet made a contribution as great as the English and French - most scholars would say greater? And why did Western scholars devote so much effort to the decipherment and recovery of the monuments of ancient Middle Eastern civilization, long since forgotten in their own countries?⁵

Lewis argues that in Said's urge to emphasise the connection between Western scholarship and imperial power, he selectively foregrounds specific British and French scholars, and wilfully omits and misrepresents others to suit his own hypothesis:

To prove his thesis, Mr. Said rearranges both the geography and the history of Orientalism and ... places the main development [of it] ... in Britain and France ... In fact, these studies were well established in Britain and France long before even the erroneously early date that he assigns to British and French expansion. (Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 108)

This emphasis upon British and French Orientalists, at the expense of other nations, is also criticised: 'at no time before or after the imperial age did their contribution, in

range, depth, or standard, match the achievement of the great centres of Oriental studies in Germany and neighbouring countries.’ (Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 108)

Robert Irwin has also criticised Said’s geographical locations in *Orientalism* by stating that his study conveniently ignored the domination of 19th century Oriental studies by countries like Germany that did not explicitly possess an Eastern empire.⁶ Irwin supports Lewis’s assertion that British and French Orientalists from the late eighteenth century were not directly influenced by Western imperialism. He argues that it was ‘extremely difficult to detect a political agenda in such scholarship – even an unconscious one. There are such things as pure scholars.’ (Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 302) Lewis expands on this idea of pure scholarship by connecting Oriental learning with the West. ‘Arab scholars working in the various fields with which the Orientalists have been concerned ... have contributed extensively to Orientalist journals and have participated generally in Orientalist symposia, colloquia, and other international activities.’ (Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 116) Both Irwin and Lewis defend Orientalist scholarship from Said’s criticisms by stating that it has done much to enhance the study of Eastern cultures and societies within the Orient and not just in the West:

[Said seems] equally unaware of the large and growing literature of self-criticism produced by Arab authors who try to examine some of the failings and weaknesses of Arab society and culture and in so doing make, in a much more acute form, many of the observations for which Mr. Said attacks the Orientalists. (Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 113)

Lewis argues that Orientalism has had positive effects on cultural studies within the Middle East, and for this reason has not been comprehensively rejected in the manner Said strives for.

David Kopf in his book *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (1969) delineates a process where British Orientalism was actually instrumental in laying the groundwork for a local cultural reawakening. In particular, Kopf states that the native Bengali intelligentsia in Calcutta were invited to engage with local colonial reforms in a process of mutual advancement. This dynamic of reciprocity in colonial relations is absent in the Saidian thesis on Orientalism:

A socio-intellectual revolution had taken place in what may then have been the largest non-Western city in the world ... every effort was made to reach the local elite. Hastings's policy was designed to encourage Orientalists and Bengalis to work together for common goals.⁷

Kopf's analysis can be viewed as a critique of Said's formulations because they are primarily centred on the idea that British Orientalism in the early nineteenth century was an exclusively dominating structure with the express desire to impose British modernisations on India at the expense of local customs and traditions.

Social reformers such as Radhakant Deb and Ramohan Roy are shown to have been active members of the social reform movement in this period within Bengal.⁸ Kopf states that Radhakant Deb's 'cultural attitudes were clearly Orientalist-inspired in that he saw no conflict between indigenous and Western learning ... [Also] his Bengali peers would never have participated in a program that they felt was aimed at the destruction of their own civilisation.' (Kopf, *British Orientalism*, 195) British Orientalists, in Kopf's summation, had 'contributed to the formation of a new Indian middle class, systemised languages, brought printing and publishing to India, and encouraged the proliferation of books, journals, newspapers and other media of communication.' (Kopf, *British Orientalism*, 275) Kopf presents the argument that British Orientalism as a modernising movement with localised sensitivities had contributed genuinely positive features to the development of Indian culture; a process augmented by local elites.

Jenny Sharpe also defends the early Orientalist movement from any wholesale criticism from Said, because in her estimation his binary conceptions of the Orient and Occident merely reduce the heterogeneous cultures of the East to a monolithic negation of European culture. She asserts that India in particular represents a far more complex and unstable image in the mind of the West than Said gives credence to. Consequently, Sharpe accuses Said of deliberately conflating Western prejudices of the Middle East with that of India. 'India - that proverbial land of desire to which Europeans turned for their lost heritage - plays an altogether different role in Western self-representation than the threatening Arab-Islamic world.'⁹ In addition to this critique, the absence of other Oriental terrains, such as China and Japan, from Said's *Orientalism*, has also been negatively received by critics of his work. Sharpe expands this criticism by stating that his conception of Orientalist discourse, as being produced by the structures of an academic field of knowledge, are incompatible with romantic Orientalism because in her words the 'first generation of Orientalists were civil servants who were also scholars rather than the other way round.' (Sharpe, 'The Violence of Light,' 29) Thus, Sharpe places William Jones and his contemporaries within a dynamic where their scholarship was not an exclusive design constructed to rule, but inversely, that their roles as effective administrators demanded native study.

The Indian Marxist scholar Aijaz Ahmed also defends British Orientalism from being defined exclusively as a design for power. He accuses Said of essentialisms in the manner he denounces the whole of European culture and Orientalist scholarship as a form of 'paranoia,' where European thought is in itself portrayed as something unitary, monolithic and whole. 'These ways of dismissing entire civilisations as diseased formations are unfortunately far too familiar to us

who live on the other side of the colonial divide, from the history of imperialism itself.’¹⁰ Aijaz Ahmed argues that Orientalists such as William Jones genuinely attempted to build cross-cultural understanding. He critiques Said’s formulations because they refuse the idea that one can find a language to speak to and about the ‘other,’ without succumbing to dogma that is designed to exert power over its subject.

Fred Dallmayr in his work *Beyond Orientalism* (1996) outlines a vision that he believes can be the foundation of a cross-cultural endeavour that interpolates the uncertain nature of history writing and the multiplicity of subject positions across the global divide of Orient and Occident. Dallmayr argues that when the scholar is able to respect the ‘otherness of the text’¹¹ and distance himself from his own subjective position in the world, then a genuine co-being with Otherness is possible, but only in a series of constant renegotiations. What Dallmayr ultimately calls for is a ‘willingness to “risk oneself,” that is, to plunge headlong into a transformative learning process in which the status of self and other are continuously renegotiated.’ (Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism*, xviii) Thus Dallmayr proposes a cross-cultural study where the West can be Orientalised and the East Occidentalised as long as the production of knowledge is viewed as fluid, interrelated and constantly evolving. The readings I offer for the various Indian writers analysed, will begin to explore the possibilities of such an approach. Conceptually mixed identities between individuals and cultures can expose the instability of historical meanings through time, as these fusions have been historically viewed as either absent or impossible by hegemonic discourses such as Orientalism. Through this instability, a process of reverse Orientalism can be glimpsed and grasped in the writings of Indian travellers,

immigrants and settlers in Britain who have played an important role in the formation of British society today: before, during and after colonialism.

Richard King has foregrounded the relevance of such an interconnected approach towards Orientalism at the level of culture. It is at this level within a British context, that my own study's conception of reverse Orientalism is placed:

Cultures are not homogeneous and static entities or essences (as summed up in such phrases as 'the Indian mentality', or the 'Western world-view', etc.); rather they are historically evolving processes, which are distorted if they are reified. In so far as a culture persists, it is constantly subject to revisions, reinterpretations and transformations of one kind or another.¹²

My study looks to expand on these critical initiatives by demonstrating that British society has been relatively shaped by a variety of social and cultural influences from India, and Indian minorities within Britain, over the last three hundred years. This social process is ongoing. I would also like to declare that my readings acknowledge difference, through the enduring relevance of homogenous social models such as nationalism, but more importantly, are motivated by a desire to culturally connect and move past such polarised thinking. King has conceived of this approach as a cultural comparativism that rethinks difference through connection:

This opens up the possibility of a new comparativism grounded in an awareness and investigation of heterogeneities and cross-cultural parallels and the destabilization of fixed, oppositional and homogenized entities such as 'India' and 'Europe' ... Simply speaking, this represents a recognition that there are differences and similarities to be noted within as well as between cultures. (King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 79)

My contribution to the various readings of Orientalist discourse is firstly to acknowledge its enduring relevance and complexity. More importantly, however, it is an attempt to reconfigure it as a discursive space which can show how Indian people's difference connects and contributes to the constantly evolving state of British society and culture: as King describes, 'just as cultures are constantly

evolving, so, of course, are scholarly traditions of interpretation, which remain manifestations of such cultural development.' (King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 79)

My Theory of Reverse Orientalism

My conception of the thesis has been heavily shaped by two factors. First, I wanted to probe the relative absence of archived literary histories of Indians within Britain before the mass migration of the post World War Two era. Second, the extensive legacy of Britain's influence upon India, during, before and after colonialism, convinced me that there were valuable stories to be told that responded to these historical intrusions and co-constructions. A dialogical flow must have existed for imperialism to ferment and reign so successfully within the Orient. After reading Edward Said and his critics, I recognised that studies on Empire and Orientalism have emphasised the passive and receptive elements in particular of Oriental participation in those processes. Unlocking the assertive and positive elements in such a discourse would also enable forms of discursive transformation. With my initial enquires substantiated, I examine how Indian travellers viewed Britain's relationship with India. More importantly in terms of a fresh perspective, I analyse how they perceived Britain and subsequently shaped it for the generations to come. I excavate and connect a series of Indian writers and their texts to foreground an invaluable corpus of literary histories that describe a larger period of social co-construction within Britain than has hitherto been studied collectively in a literary context.

In previous studies, early Indian travel writers may have been studied in isolation (see Fisher), amidst a wider body of Commonwealth authors (Innes) or a narrower chronological sample (*Counterflows*).¹³ My research is different from these antecedent works in a variety of ways. First, it connects a sample of Asian writers

from 1770-2010. Second, it places them specifically within an Anglo-Indian context, distinct from other areas of the Empire. Also, their effects on the whole of Britain are analysed, and not just a specific geographical area, as is the case with Sukhdev Sandhu's *London Calling*.¹⁴ What distinguishes my study most effectively from these earlier works is the employment of a critical framework that primarily focuses on the manner in which Orientalist discourse could be co-opted, deconstructed and reversed at social/cultural levels within Britain. Conceptually, this specific approach has not been attempted before, across the model I outline above. The other significant motivation behind my research is to connect this literary social co-construction with the very real and present concern of discord between the West and Islam. In my view, this political, cultural, and social polarisation has to some extent reconstructed and solidified the Orientalist divide within Britain. This division, which had begun to be challenged by the enabling potentialities of immigration, globalisation and multiculturalism, constitutes an era of neo-Orientalism. It is my study's aspiration to showcase that a circularity of social co-construction within Britain, across time and the Orientalist divide, can be used as an effective weapon against the re-entrenchment of discursive polarities in that continuing cultural conversation.

Orientalism as a discourse is underpinned by a series of divisions between East/West, coloniser/colonised and Orient/Occident. I will be exploring how these dialectics have been far from unproblematic and that these distinctions have clouded a history of social engagements and processes that refuse binary labels. Orientalism as a discourse was far too malleable to resist its manipulation and reversal. Binary distinctions also disavow the idea that British society and its cultural modernisation were relatively influenced by the presence of Oriental (Indian) settlers and travellers,

over the last three hundred years. Colonialism as an economic, political, social and structural reality was not just a linear process that flowed from the West to the East. The presence of the Orient found its way to the Occident, a legacy which remains today and is likely to grow stronger in an increasingly globalised world. To make sense of these increased interrelations, the histories of such engagements needs to be exposed and further explored for their impact. Expositions of such presences are also needed to fill a void in British colonial historical constructions of Britain which have generally viewed the social landscape of Britain as being ethnically uncomplicated before the fall of its Empire. This is of benefit to both the ethnic majority (white British) and minority communities (British-Asian) within Britain when faced with post-colonial issues of identity, social inclusivity and cultural integration.

Subaltern archives help migrant and host communities ‘not only to remember and document their past but also to understand the present day and its connections to that past.’¹⁵ This historical awareness better reflects ‘the complexity and multiple identities of British society, past, present and future.’ (Finn, ‘Community Histories,’ 160) By archiving the presence of Indian diaries, letters, memoirs and travelogues, describing Britain from 1770 onwards, I foreground historical co-constructions of the Occident, both in the East and the West. These texts question the powerlessness of Oriental subjects to reroute the hegemonic designs of Orientalist discourse. Britain was also Orientalised to an extent and the evidence exists within the multicultural social structure that continues to evolve, flourish and provoke.

The discourse of Orientalism relied for its strength and durability on its manifold strands of enunciation; these encompassed academic texts, autobiographies, maps, legal documents, travelogues and translations amongst many others. My thesis

demonstrates that the process of reversing the parameters of Orientalism was also dependent on this malleability where new forms of discourse could be formed with the aid of existing structures of knowledge and power. I would stress that the writers investigated do not represent a mimetic dialogical response to Orientalism, an Occidentalism used to dominate the West, because such a formulation could not sustain itself in economic, political or social terms. The power/knowledge dialectic of Orientalism and its definitions of Indians have been to some extent reversed at social and cultural levels. I acknowledge that this does not make it a symmetrical counter discursive response to the cultural hegemony of British Orientalism within India. Instead, I seek to argue that Indian travellers and settlers have reversed the discursive structures (Oriental stereotypes for example) of Orientalism at cultural, local and social levels. They were able to use it to create novel and reverse Orientalisms within Britain, in order to comprehend and create new realities, ameliorate different cultural customs and norms and ultimately to alter the social landscape of Britain. My positive approach, when placed alongside other Orientalist critiques, can further enhance our understanding of the multiple forms that Orientalism can take.

My ideas of reverse Orientalism, with specific reference to Said's definitions, also recognise that Orientalist discourse represents an enduring historical process. By foregrounding my writers as reverse Orientalists, who have used elements of Orientalist discourse to help create British identities over the last three hundred years, I can be seen to corroborate this part of his thesis. However, my application of this historical legacy challenges Said's idea that Orientalist discursive practices can only significantly constitute an abstract Other within its forms of discourse. The readings I forward within the West are variously used in order to problematise binary

conceptions of what is Oriental and what is Occidental. Consequently, my thesis complicates Said's assertion that Orientalism exists primarily to engender an 'ontological and epistemological distinction' between the Orient and the Occident. (Said, *Orientalism*, 2)

Moreover, it is a counter-cultural discourse that operates through everyday relations on a local and social level; it is not placed within an academic institution. Nor is it an 'Eastern style' for dominating and having authority over British society. Reverse Orientalism's resistance to the hegemonic aims of conventional Orientalist discourse does not have supporting establishments, such as the government, military and judiciary, which variously supported Orientalists such as William Jones and James Mill. What it has done is to alter the social dynamic of British society, where power relations between government and state have needed to account for the presence of Asian minorities; a presence that has steadily increased and will grow stronger in the future with the greater relevance of globalisation to everyday life. Multiculturalism has been the response needed to account for and make sense of these social inter-relations. By placing my rubric of reverse Orientalism as a discursive form of multicultural expression that has grown stronger and more complex through the years, I seek to foreground the relevance of, and need for, such cross-cultural gestures to challenge polarised thinking. It is distinct in this respect also from the binary deconstructions of Said's *Orientalism* which to some extent essentialises the West's view of the Orient and thus deprives it of nuance and internal variance.

My counter-discursive strategies are constituted through literatures, social relations and cultural negotiations that are distinct from the economic and political

aims of British Orientalism in India. Conventional British Orientalists examined by Said were politically relevant to the development and exercise of imperialism in India. Sir William Jones combined his legal duties with a deep interest in the cultures and literary texts of India's past; Jones viewed in them a mystical imagination that might help re-invigorate European culture. The work of the Victorian philologist Max Muller was also much indebted to this legacy; he too became transfixed by the history of India's glorious past and the historical spectre of co-constructions between the Orient and the Occident.¹⁶

British Orientalist scholarship, and its innate sense of moral superiority, was expressed more explicitly within a British-Indian context by Anglicists such as Thomas Macaulay, Charles Grant and the utilitarians James and John Stuart Mill. James Mill's treatise on *The History of British India* is perhaps British Orientalism's most famous and influential text book.¹⁷ The text served, both in Saidian and explicit terms, as a key instrument for the government of India. It 'became a standard work for the East India Company officials, and eventually a textbook for candidates for the Indian civil service.'¹⁸ Moreover, it was used as a doctrine to not only govern the Indian population but also shape 'a theoretical basis for the liberal programme to emancipate India from its own culture.' (Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 127) Anglicist Orientalism was purposely designed to modify Indian society according to Western conventions. This social change was deemed as eminently achievable even though it required widespread Indian acceptance. My formulations of reverse Orientalism can alternatively be viewed as a theoretical device that conceives how cultures are not liberated or purified, but complicated and continually negotiated. This delineation of cultural hybridity distinguishes my form of reverse Orientalism from the binary discursive frameworks of Anglicist discourse.

I would also concede that within a Saidian framework, romantic Orientalists such as Jones and Muller were able to escape some of the definitions that Anglicists so defiantly exhibited. However, they were still implicated within a Euro-centric conception of reality. The India they perceived to be real, and potentially nourishing for European culture, was still perceived in terms of how it could serve European needs, be they in terms of the imagination, literature or culture in general. Oriental influence was only externally conceived, and thus unevenness in the cultural exchange remained. Richard King states that ‘the romanticist view of the Orient is still a distortion, even if motivated by a respect for the Orient. As such, it participates in the projection of stereotypical forms that allows for a domestication and control of the East.’ (King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 92) My idea of reverse Orientalism is conceived in order to challenge these stereotypical forms that simplify the Orient collectively and individually; simplifications that connect romantic Orientalists with their Anglicist counterparts. My readings foreground the complexity of the British Asian experience, which has enriched British society on the other side of the Orientalist divide. They also challenge the construction of Orientalist stereotypes that still operate today from within the parameters of Western discursive frameworks. Moreover, my analyses do not strive to replicate their designs for power, only to expose their co-ordinated dogmas and the potential for them to be challenged.

Reverse Orientalism as an idea, and its subsequent implementation in my thesis, can be viewed as a new way of conceiving and comprehending relations between the Orient and the Occident, in both the East and the West. Hayden White in *Tropics of Discourse* has stated that ‘history today has an opportunity to avail itself of the new perspectives on the world which a dynamic science and an equally

dynamic art offer.¹⁹ My thesis is just one of these new perspectives that need to be identified, explored and analysed for the historical constructions between the Orient and Occident to be understood in a dynamic context. The history of Orientalism has been dominated by the idea that it was only a linear process, directed from the West to the East. However, such conceptions ascribed to Orientalism have failed to account for the forms in which Orientals were able to write back to the Occident; to demonstrate that despite its inequalities it was indeed a dialectical relationship. As White says, ‘Histories then, are not only about events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure.’ (White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 94) My ultimate aim in the upcoming chapters is to demonstrate that the historical relationship between Britain and India, mediated through the discursive frameworks of Orientalism, was much more vibrant and balanced than historically conceived in British and colonial histories.²⁰

By understanding and reading this process within the framework of Orientalist discourse (and reversing it), I have strived to complicate the ideas of encasement and powerlessness that have historically dominated conventional readings (British colonial history/ Saidian Orientalism) of Anglo-Indian relations over the last three hundred years; especially within Britain. Said’s largely male-gendered response to colonial encroachment has ignored both the influences of British female Orientalists and the ability of Indian women to subsequently formulate counter-discursive responses. ‘Orientalism itself ... was an exclusively male province.’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 207) My study proposes on a relative scale, to bridge this gender gap by firstly analysing the forms in which Orientalist discourse was strengthened by British women within India. But also more importantly, it aims to showcase how Indian women within Britain and India, were also able to formulate

counter discursive strategies to Orientalism that co-mingled Eastern and Western sensibilities. For example, Cornelia Sorabji intrinsically valued the benefits she gleaned from British modernisation, such as education, travel, and (colonial) public service. However, she also rejected the wholesale application of British modernisations upon an Indian social landscape that needed to grow without the total imposition of Western values and social practices. Sorabji calls for social change to be conducted within a polyvalent and locally sensitive approach (see chapter two in regards to female rights and the importance of the domestic sphere within India).

By focusing on the colonial domestic sphere in chapter two, I foreground a female gendered reverse Orientalist approach which aims to avoid Said's counter-discursive formulations in *Orientalism*; these largely ignore Oriental women in their deconstructive readings of (post) colonial history in India and Britain. I attempt to engage in a process where the subaltern female can begin to be phased out of the 'shadow' of patriarchal Orientalist discourse.²¹ (Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' 28) It is worth recognising however, that this previous neglect of the Indian female voice in Orientalist critiques such as Said's, was in part due to the restricted opportunities Indian women faced in regards to social freedoms and education. Meyda Yeğenoğlu's feminist study on *Colonial Fantasies* (1998) has been one earlier project which has called for sexuality to be viewed as a governing aspect of Orientalist discourse, and not a distinct one, operating at the periphery:

We need to subject Orientalist discourse to a more sexualised reading ... so we can understand how the representation of otherness is achieved simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation. The Western acts of understanding the Orient and its women are not two distinct enterprises, but are rather interwoven aspects of the same gesture.²²

In chapter two, my counter-discursive readings of reverse Orientalism can be viewed as a critical endeavour which has sought to build on feminist studies which have attempted to re-situate the Indian woman in colonial discourse.²³

Counter-discursive strategies presented by Indian writers such as Sorabji, Janaki Majumdar, and Nirad C. Chaudhuri are not explicitly nationalist. Consequently, the forms of post-colonial resistance that I analyse are not literary equivalents of nationalist ideologies exhibited by Indian political luminaries such as Jawaharlal Nehru or W. C. Bonnerjee. They are readings centred on the ability of Indian writers to penetrate and operate between the Orientalist divide, within Britain and India. For example, Sorabji consciously pursues a relative co-mingling of Eastern and Western values in her designs for social change in India. This relative framework distinguishes her outlook from being avowedly nationalist; it is not a symmetrical agenda allied to the discourse of Indian nationalism. Furthermore, most of my analyses are located within Britain. Indian nationalism offered a direct challenge to British colonialism and its derivative arm of Orientalism within India. Moreover, they were also both elite discourses which held comparable socio-political objectives. The conflict between British colonialism and Indian nationalism was in essence a binary conversation conducted in the public sphere. My study, and the readings that I offer, aim to work through these binaries at local, cultural, domestic and social levels within Britain. It is not an overt historical study on Indian nationalism and its contestation with the colonial state, in spite of the fact that some of my texts are variously centred in India, and share some its concerns (e.g. female rights, colonial administration).

In some respects, my thesis corresponds with the forms in which 'Indian nationalism and nationalist historiography ... accepted the patterns set for them by British scholarship.'²⁴ Gyan Prakash has stated that Indian nationalism's 'commitment to the idea of India as an essential and undivided entity, and to knowledge as more or less adequate representation of the real, underlay ... complicities ... [with] Orientalist procedures.' (Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories,' 390) I accept that my study is undertaken within the parameters of a Western discursive construct (Orientalism) and the domain of a British university. However, by situating my counter-cultural readings as dynamic, internally variant and subject to change, I seek to avoid the essentialisms that underpin both Orientalist and nationalist ideologies. As opposed to nationalisms, my analyses do not seek to ascribe a unified form of identity to the Indian migrant within Britain. The individual agent is not placed within a monolithic construct devoid of internal variances. My project can be related to Indian nationalist historiography, in the one respect that it also attempts to force 'debates on [Orientalist] sources and ... [expose] much that was unknown ... [where] regional histories ... [can come] into focus.' (Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories,' 389) However, my regional presence and focus is situated on the other side of the Orientalist divide, where my interpretations can be read within a spirit of transformation.

Also, my readings are offered as evidence that complicates ideas of a purely white-British national body, which was untouched by Indian influences before 1945. I demonstrate that British society has been a relatively hybridised terrain which has been subject to cultural negotiations from across the Orientalist divide for over two hundred and fifty years. These negotiations have grown stronger and more numerous over that period. My conception of reverse Orientalism, wrought though the

individual authors, is conscious of the varied place each writer held in terms of religion, ethnicity and class. As a consequence, I do not rigidly position them as a collective minority (Indian) which is unchanged over time. Instead, they are connected as a body of writers who have variously used their discursive framings, as tools to create new and individual ways of being British. This fluid concept of identity distinguishes my project from the unitary logic of nationalist ideologies. A positive approach to reversing Orientalist discourse can be used to highlight the ability of Indian migrants to manipulate hegemonic discursive practices and actually use such tools, on a socio-cultural level, to create models of understanding and acceptance across communities in a multicultural Britain. These aspects are worthy of attention and further studies.

Post-Colonial Resistance and the Subaltern

Helen Tiffin has defined the purpose of post-colonialism as a literary project ‘to investigate the European textual capture and containment of colonial and post-colonial space and to intervene in that originary and continuing containment.’²⁵ My project is thus a post-colonial study that proposes to construct a counter-discursive reading of Orientalism and its structuring of knowledge regarding the ‘Oriental Other’ (Indian, Muslim, and Asian) within Britain. My study’s resistance to the dominant centre (Orientalism/British colonial history) is to demonstrate that the very discursive arm of imperial subjugation (Orientalism) could actually be used to create post-colonial (hybridised British-Asian) spaces within Britain, both during and after the colonial period (1770-2010). The various texts in my study, and the subsequent readings offered within it, all constitute a dynamic and varied reading of Orientalist discourse and its classification of Anglo-Indian relations across the Orientalist divide. Tiffin argues that if post-colonialism is viewed as a broadly counter-discursive terrain where the resulting strategies can take many forms in different cultures then a more satisfactory model of post-colonial resistance can be mapped ‘than national, racial, or cultural groupings based on marginalisation.’ (Tiffin, ‘Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse,’ 96) Such a varied conception of post-colonialism needs to be applied to the counter discursive mechanisms of my study, which adopts a variety of reading strategies which veer from the co-option of dominant discourses to an outright resistance to them. It also comprises a wide variety of writers and texts that occupy different places within the socio-political frameworks of sex, class and ethnicity.

The dynamic and changing nature of counter-discourse is further emphasised by Tiffin who stresses that ‘decolonisation is process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between European or British discourses and their post-colonial dis/mantling.’ (Tiffin, ‘Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse,’ 95) Again, this is a fluid discursive approach employed in my study which illustrates both the enduring ability of Orientalism to influence East-West relations globally, and the varied manner in which Indian travellers and settlers, over the last 250 years, have utilised, subverted and reversed Orientalist discourse within Britain. It has not been a symmetrical, standardised or unified form of resistance:

Post-colonial literatures/cultures are thus constituted in counter-discursive rather than homologous practices, and they offer ‘fields’ of counter-discursive strategies to the dominant discourse. The operation of post-colonial counter-discourse is dynamic, not static: it does not seek to subvert the dominant [discourse] with a view to taking its place, but ... to evolve textual strategies which continually ‘consume’ their ‘own biases’ at the same time as they expose and erode those of the dominant discourse.... (Tiffin, ‘Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse,’ 95-96)

Although in chapter four, my reading of Islamism as reverse Orientalism frames it as an ideology which *does* seek to replace the dominant, the majority of my readings emanate from within Tiffin’s understanding of post-colonial counter discourse as a textual strategy that looks to discursively challenge and not replicate the central order.

Richard Terdiman, in his work on symbolic resistance in nineteenth century France, introduces a concept of ‘counter-discourse’ that suggests all discourses come into being within an environment of competing, contrasting utterances: ‘no discourse is ever a monologue, nor could it ever be analyzed “intrinsically.” Its assertions, its tone, its rhetoric – everything that constitutes it – always presuppose a horizon of

competing, contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies.’²⁶ Terdiman maintains that this complex and everlasting interplay between the opposing dynamics of stability (dominant discourse) and destabilisation (counter-discourse) is central to and directional for both historical and cultural change. He does afford counter-discourse a relative degree of transgressive potential, but this is configured only in terms of how it exists as a response to the dialectical dominance of the established central power:

Otherness, difference, the heterological, are thus essential attributes of the realm of words, signs, and discourses. Indeed their theoretical potentiality is everywhere presupposed by the ideological police which seek to exclude them while never admitting that they might already exist. But in turn this conflicted relation with dominant language defines a crucial privilege of any language of difference, of any counter-discourse. Situated as other, counter-discourses have the capacity to *situate*: to relativize the authority and stability of a dominant system of utterances which cannot even countenance their existence. (Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 15-16)

With reference to my thesis, the idea that reverse Orientalism can be viewed in symmetrical terms to the hegemony of imperial Orientalism is discounted by Terdiman’s formulations: ‘Counter-discourses inhabit and struggle with the dominant which inhabits them. But their footing is never equal.’ (Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 18)

Richard Terdiman does acknowledge that counter discursive practices are an essential component of social relations, given that they have the power to resist dominant discourses at a relative level in terms of power and influence:

The space for ... counter-discourses... [are] opened in ... [the] structural limitation of social control ... So no dominant discourse is ever fully protected from contestation. Of course the counter-discourses which exploit such vulnerability implicitly evoke a principal of order just as systematic as that which sustains the discourses they seek to subvert. (Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 56)

However, he argues that in offering resistance to the dominant discourse we become more aware of the eminence of its power. The demonstration of a dominant discourse's:

incompleteness, its partiality, its internal ruptures cannot invalidate the conviction that such hegemonic discourses are operative and determinant ... [because] the very work of contestation which detects such ruptures makes us most directly aware of the dominant's massive, seemingly ineradicable power. (Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 57)

In the mapping of reverse Orientalist discourse, my study has engaged with this dialogical relationship; the shifting and enduring relevance of Orientalist polarities and binary thought have required an equally varied and durable counter-discursive response. My study, configured as a literary history, demonstrates that Orientalisms within Britain have needed to be challenged in order for social change to be realised (cultural integration) or prevented (social ghettoisation) over the last three hundred years. Orientalist discourse continues to challenge social relations within Britain and across the Orientalist divide; in this respect it continues to act as the central reference point for post-colonialism to resist.

I would place my study in contrast with Terdiman's conceptions in one specific respect; I believe that reverse Orientalism as a counter discourse has not just represented an overt challenge to the prevailing orthodoxy of Orientalist discourse. It has variously co-opted and resisted the dominant discourse and thus cannot be conceived of as a cultural and textual strategy that offers only explicit resistance to Orientalist discourse in wholesale terms. Terdiman states that 'for every dominant discourse, a contrary and transgressive counter-discourse.' (Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, 65) My study's conception of reverse Orientalism is not conceived entirely in oppositional forms. Linda Hutcheon's conception of

counter discourse is more representative of the discursive approach I foreground in my thesis:

I see counter-discourses as, by definition, *both/and* (not *either/or*): both resistant to and dependent upon those dominant discourses that develop out of the normalized order of shared values. Counter-discourses are both disruptive of and, paradoxically, still defined by the dominant. They are thus additive in a simultaneously constructive and critical way.²⁷

I view elements of co-option and cultural amelioration as practical forms of resistance to the binary terms of Orientalist discourse. For example, an early Indian traveller could market their 'Otherness' in order to legitimise their reasons for settling in Britain. By sharing in the Orientalist discursive practice of exotica they could establish a new and distinct British space: 'counter-discourses can be seen as working critically and constructively *within* the doxa, creatively transcending the limits of *either/or*, binary, and oppositional thinking ... not in terms of competition but in terms of inclusivity and plurality.' (Hutcheon, 'Rhetoric and Competition: Academic Agonistics,' 49). Thus, counter-discursive strategies can formulate and operate within dominant discourses as well as against them.

In my study's context, the term 'the subaltern' is firstly a reference to the work of Antonio Gramsci, whose ideas of 'cultural hegemony' heavily influenced Said's conception of Orientalism. The term itself has operated in a variety of contexts, and as a result its meaning has to be recognised in broad terms. It can literally refer to any person or group of people who are inferior because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. My usage of the term subaltern is the classification of it as a definition that refers to the culturally and socio-politically dispossessed. In this respect it can be related to the ideas of the 'Subaltern Studies' group insofar as it attempts to unlock a literary 'history from

below.’²⁸ Moreover my thesis is not an explicit historiography where my research is overtly attempting to unshackle the subaltern from the tyrannies of colonialism and Indian nationalism within South Asia. It is, on the other hand, a project that strives to uncover the voices of Indian travellers and settlers who have left an alternative engagement with conventional (Saidian) Orientalist discourse in their cultural navigations through Britain over the last three hundred years. The discursive practices I foreground illustrate that an alternative idea of reverse Orientalism, as a form of post-colonial resistance, could variously facilitate dynamics of social change and cultural amelioration within Britain at micro levels. With reference to ‘Subaltern Studies,’ I place the Indian traveller/settler and writer as a non-elite agent able to relatively effect cultural and social change. This conception of Orientalist discourse crucially distinguishes it from the exclusive implementation of dominance by the colonial power (Britain) across the Orientalist divide and within Britain. Also, it is not figured as a unified reversal and thus, my study does not seek to deny the heterogeneous positions each writer holds in terms of class, gender, religion and ethnicity. In this respect I refer to Spivak’s assertion that ‘one must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous.’ (Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ 26)

The ability of the ‘subaltern to speak’ has been constantly debated in post-colonial studies and within the ‘Subaltern Studies’ group itself. Gayatri C. Spivak has been the most famous critical voice cautioning against the positivist desire of post-colonial critics to ascribe universal consciousness to the subaltern. This caution has been directed towards Western feminism’s ‘historical complicity with imperialism and the tendency of some western feminist thinkers to ignore the specific social, cultural and historical circumstances of non-Western women’s lives.’

(Morton, *Gayatri Spivak*, 124) This positivist desire and critical danger has also been identified within the historiographies of the 'Subaltern Studies' group, of which Spivak was an associated member: 'to investigate, discover, and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness seems at first to be a positivistic project – a project which assumes that, if properly prosecuted, it will lead to firm ground, to some *thing* that can be disclosed.'²⁹

Spivak has cautioned against the urge of Westernised critics to speak for the subaltern as a collective because, in her summation, this will help perpetuate subaltern peoples' already subordinate positions in society. In order to counter this circumscription, Spivak urges for 'postcolonial intellectuals ... [to] learn that their privilege is their loss.' (Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' 28) I do not seek to deny both my privileged place as a British scholar, and that of the dominant Western centre I am situated in. Orientalism by its very nature is an elite form of discourse; consequently, any attempts to reverse those discursive practices can only be done within the parameters of that dominant discourse. In formulating my counter-discursive strategy within the bounds of an elite discursive field, I have to acknowledge that such a process can be viewed as compromised in its subversion. However, my analyses are conducted in the pursuit of communication rather than radical usurpation and thus my readings can still be viewed as subversive because they reconceptualise Orientalist discourse as a provisional medium for social and cultural conversation. Orientalism as an exclusive Western design for power is also conceptually redrawn. It is my belief that a counter-cultural unity can be ascribed to the various Asian writers I analyse, because their negotiations of Orientalist discourse variously utilise and challenge binary discourses in order to deconstruct social and cultural polarities. My allocation of a collective counter-discursive voice

to the Indian subaltern within Britain is also purposely conducted through discursive modes that are unevenly accessible to the prevailing orthodoxy (colonial centre); these asymmetrical power relations are acknowledged by my research.

My positioning of Indian travellers and settlers within Britain as a social collective, who have been able to read, utilise and reverse Orientalist discourse, acknowledge that such critical framings can become and be viewed as essentialist. In order to combat this accusation, my readings are undertaken within a strategy to situate these writers in positions that problematise the idea of Orientalism as a discourse only exercised by the dominant (British) over the minority (Asian). They are provisional designations and not centred/mimetic reversals. Spivak's notion of 'strategic essentialism' has informed the reading strategy that I employ in my thesis; that in constructing a formula to excavate early travel writers, and link them to contemporary authors, it is critically advantageous to provisionally 'essentialise' them. I employ this critical method, with all the attendant difficulties this incurs, in order to construct a counter-discursive strategy that has allowed them to 'write back' collectively to the Empire, within Britain, using its own discursive practices. Consequently, I recognise that my literary histories can be viewed as a collective and 'strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest.' (Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,' 13) My reading strategy unifies Indian minority groups (across gender) within Britain, in order to construct a reverse Orientalist framework that ascribes them a relative degree of power to challenge conventional Orientalist prejudices and stereotypes.

Methodology

I intend this methodology to act as a means to interpret the ensuing chapters where my analysis and interpretive readings can be both recognised and challenged. The methodological perspective I bring to bear on my research is a post-colonial one (I place my idea of reverse Orientalism within this framework) and thus I acknowledge the focus, support and influence this angle above others will have on the readings I produce.³⁰ My readings look to both re-route and re-root previous ideas and debates regarding Orientalist discourse and its ordering of relations between Britain and India. The ability of Indians to co-opt themselves into the Orientalist project within India is analysed but my general focus is trained upon the capacity of Indian migrant travellers and settlers to both utilise and reverse Orientalist discourse within Britain on local, social and cultural levels. However, I do not draw a direct analogy between the reverse Orientalist accounts of Britain and those that were more closely aligned with the instruments of power and imperial control within India.

These British Orientalist textual forms framing India were manifold and included travelogues, maps, surveys, grammars, translations, legal tracts and medical treatises. All of the non-fictional forms in this colonial dialectic were used to facilitate the imperial dominion of India and an exalted place of power for Britain. One of the main aims of my thesis is to showcase the dextrous response of Asian (Oriental/Indian) travellers and settlers in Britain to the crossing of the Orientalist divide between Britain and India that disturbed this power dialectic to a relative extent. In terms of genres analysed, my thesis includes autobiographies, conversations, diaries, journal articles, letters, medical treatises, memoirs, and

travelogues. However, these counter-cultural constructions within Britain are analysed for their effects on a micro level; their influences on British society and its modernisations were not institutional but conducted within quotidian society.

Chronologically, the range of writers exhibited, the first text being composed in 1765, also directly precipitated the need to look past fictional representations of counter-cultural composition within Britain. Inclusion of non-fiction is an enabling function to represent a realistic depiction of the Oriental traveller's experiences in and influences upon Britain, during a period of time that has been neglected in British histories. This pre-dates the post-colonial recognition of their place as British citizens. To give my study historical depth and analytical connection, I needed to successfully navigate the difficulty of constructing my readings from within different genres of non-fiction. For example, this approach allowed me to read contemporary memoirs such as Imran Ahmad's and Sarfraz Manzoor's within a similar analytical framework employed for texts written by travellers (travelogue) over two hundred years ago. In a broad study which encompasses multiple authors and socio-political frameworks this decision was needed to give the research a conceptual unity. By connecting the authors across different generic forms, I do not seek to deny the internal variance and subjectivities each counter-cultural agent held within Britain over the last three hundred years. Each writer chose individual modes of expression but I believe they were connected through thematic concerns.

By acknowledging subjectivities and understanding how they shape people's perception of themselves and their relationship to wider society we can provide a more comprehensive historical narrative whilst also acknowledging the instability and partiality of such accounts. These accounts still inform our understanding of the

way minority cultural agents socially negotiate with the majority community and their Orientalist stereotypes. Subsequently, openness to this approach can form specific understandings of the way these people have changed wider British society. For the purposes of my study, these social changes were wrought on the cultural, local, personal and social level. Since all the writers in my thesis combined political, social and cultural considerations when composing their narratives of Britain and India, my research is necessarily interdisciplinary as each method and text brings unique insights into specific categories and historical contexts. There are challenges in using such a complex polyvalent approach in terms of the working methods and different cultural frameworks in which the texts are analysed. My varied historical contextualisation is undertaken with all the attendant difficulties of avoiding incoherence and diffusion.

These materials do not contain a definitive literary history that presents a concrete version of historical fact, like all sources, they are partial and incomplete. As a result, it is important for me to highlight and consider what has been omitted and what can be further explored. Despite my attempt to construct a comprehensive study that frames these writings as a literary counter-cultural response to Orientalist discourse within Britain, I could not possibly cover everything due to the amount of different authors included (from different Indian backgrounds), the broad time period, and the plurality of genres in which they wrote. However, I agree with Alessandro Portelli's assertion that as long as 'research is broad and articulated enough, a cross-section of the subjectivity of a social group or class can be captured,' across both time, and the Orientalist divide.³¹

I will describe in more detail the selective inclusions and omissions I have made in the following literature review which will explain, by chapter, the difficulty all doctoral scholars face (word limit/ time deadlines) in constructing a comprehensive and exhaustive study. In the following passages within this methodology section, I will outline the complexities of using both a broad historical time period and multiple authors who variously wrote within different cultures, socio-political structures and non-fictional genres. The different socio-political relations between India and Britain over the last three hundred years required a varied methodological mode of analysis that would allow me to correspond with these changes. Socio-political structures and cultural climates within Britain have also varied distinctively over this period of time. For example, in chapter one, the theological debate which Mirza I'tesamuddin has with his patron regarding the practice of Islam within Britain is conducted amongst a less hostile and fraught public discursive climate than those conducted by Manzoor and Ahmad in chapter four. My readings look to work through these socio-political changes and locate the unified discursive aims that connect the Muslim writers in chapters one and four despite their socio-political and historical differences. A nuanced socio-political approach, with historical contextualisation, is needed across all of my study, in order to connect these chronologically disparate writers in ways that do not deny their individual places within the economic and socio-political structure of Britain over the last three hundred years.

As I have already acknowledged, my study as a literary history required a polyvalent approach in terms of research methods and skills. Textual analysis is a research method I employ for the whole of my study and as a result the different readings offered are shaped by my research concerns at the expense of others. I

acknowledge that these may be of significance but cannot be studied in depth because of my own subjectivity and the broad canvas in which my thesis is conceived. 'All analyses are partial, influenced by the researcher's agenda, and thus - just like the texts under scrutiny - historically situated.' (Gabriele Griffin, *Research Methods*, 99) My thesis also needs to be historically contextualised.

Some interpretive skills demanded the introduction of other research methods in order for those textual readings to be conducted in sufficient depth and analytical engagement. This is especially so in regards to the central tenet of my thesis (reverse Orientalism), which is in essence to reverse Orientalist discourse at micro levels within Britain: through social, cultural and textual channels. Consequently, all of my readings are a form of discourse analysis. This research method also admits its own partiality and incompleteness:

This means that no discourse analysis will ever be complete since it is beyond the scope of a single research project to analyse all the textual features contained in any but the briefest text. When conducting discourse analysis, a researcher therefore of necessity has to be selective, concentrating on certain textual features at the expense of others. (Gabriele Griffin, *Research Methods*, 99)

I would like to forward this same admission, when reflecting on my thesis. I concentrate my analytical gaze on the forms in which Indian migrants and settlers have used Orientalist discursive frameworks selectively in order to negotiate and create home spaces within Britain. A wider geographical and conceptual analysis of Orientalism, as a global discourse, is beyond the scope and remit of my study.

In order to demonstrate the forms in which early Indian travel writers were able to selectively read and employ Orientalist discourse within Britain, an ethnographic method is necessary to explain this discursive ability. The different classifications of India (maps, travelogues, surveys) were a vital component of

Orientalism and its functional role as a facilitator for imperial control. I also employ ethnographic methods in my first three chapters where the gaze of cultural normativity is retrained upon the British social body. This research method is also utilised to different degrees in each chapter. For example, the ethnographic method I employ in chapters one and two is less evident in chapter four as the Muslim writer's central focus is shifted to self representation in negotiation with the majority community as opposed to classifying and describing British society for a readership in India. This again reinforces the need for historical contextualisation.

I would also like to make clear the difficulty of accessing archived media reviews for the early travel writers because they were afforded limited critical attention in comparison to Western and Orientalist (British) writers. One particular example of this was the substantial critical interest afforded to the American Katherine Mayo and her history of *Mother India* (1927).³² This was in stark contrast to the scarcity of critical reviews for Cornelia Sorabji's literary canon which comprised similar themes and subject matter. Sorabji's autobiographies (*India Calling/India Recalled*),³³ which largely focused on Britain's influence upon India, were principally ignored in *The Times* because reviews were either found to be insubstantial (a few brief lines) or completely absent.³⁴ The early travel writers were in the main semi-submerged writers who were able to formulate responses to their conventional Orientalist stereotypes at the level of enunciation (publication) but were given less access to mass distribution and public reviews by the mainstream media and press. Contemporary analyses of them as writers have been difficult for me to obtain; consequently, this absence has precluded me from specifically comparing my readings with those constructed by British scholars in their respective historical contexts.

There is genuine scope to look at other writings that were composed in Indian vernaculars or other fictional genres within Britain. However, this expanded sample of texts and writers are beyond the scope of my study as they would have required more time, translation skills and an increased word limit. I do not discount that these narratives could unlock yet more varied responses to this period of colonial history and counter-cultural construction within Britain. My study conducted within a wider research project could look to expand on these avenues of thought but could not do so within this thesis. Aside from these omissions, my wish is to show that a polyvalent methodological approach (and my study as a whole) will engender a greater understanding of the ability of Indian travellers and settlers to use Orientalist stereotypes and discursive frameworks to create new versions of Britishness over the last three hundred years.

Literature Review

Because of the broad historical range of my thesis it is most productive to approach my chapters in a chronological fashion. This approach is undertaken in order to acknowledge the different socio-political frameworks each writer operated within when they composed their texts. The first chapter centres on four Indian writers of varying backgrounds who made the journey from India to the heart of the Empire at the beginning of British colonial expansion into the Orient. Previous studies on the effects and legacies of Oriental travellers and settlers to Britain have variously adopted a broader focus in regards to the national identities of the respective writers or a specific temporal or geographical site. My study, however, will focus specifically on writers from, or descendents of, the Indian subcontinent. By adopting a chronological approach from the 1700s to the modern day, I hope to foreground this presence, as a literary journey through Britain over the last three hundred years that again has hitherto not been attempted or conceived in this manner before.

My primary objective is to reveal how these early travellers from India mediated their identities as Indians but also re-pitched them as Britons, within a British social landscape that had previously not encountered multiple British identities. Edward Said's *Orientalism* is employed in the opening chapter to demonstrate the manner in which conventional Orientalist discourse (the travelogue), allowed the Western writer to both frame the Orient, and habitually convert its findings to map a manageable terrain that suited its own political needs. His text also figures as the connecting thread throughout the project, because my readings of reverse Orientalism are centred on the idea that the knowledge/power dialectic of (post) colonial relations could be reversed at micro levels within Britain. These

possibilities are unexplored in his study. Nigel Leask's work on the aesthetics of travel writing during the early colonial period stresses the imaginative endeavour and instability that existed at the heart of the Orientalist travelogue. His emphasis on the subjectivity of the picturesque travelogue opens up an avenue of thought which looks past Said's unitary conception of Orientalist discourse. It is within this mutable space that I explore the possibility of Oriental co-option into hegemonic colonial discourses. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992)³⁵, takes this fluid notion of colonial discourse one step further by conceptualising a colonial space (contact zone) where relations between coloniser and colonised are to be understood in terms of interrelations and not apartheid. Her text similarly acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations that these cultural negotiations take place within. Pratt's allowance for a selective and native engagement with Orientalist discourse in the colony informs my conception of reverse Orientalism within the colonial power (Britain). I employ her ideas of transculturation to foreground auto-ethnographies that take place within the imperial centre; this enables me to re-route (and re-root) the instability and subjectivity of Orientalist discourse. Crucially, I place the ability to co-opt, complicate and resist hegemonic colonial discourse in the hands of the Indian migrant/traveller to Britain. These enabling possibilities are not countenanced in Said's analysis of Orientalism.

I strategically apply James Clifford's travel theory in *Routes* (1997)³⁶ to showcase how host cultures can be relatively influenced and constituted by travel and migration from outside their borders. This process is delineated in the first chapter, before the existence of a significant Indian minority community within Britain. My emphasis is placed on the cosmopolitan experience of the Indian traveller and settler who navigates the British social landscape. By re-mapping to an

extent, the parameters of Orientalist discourse, I also employ Richard Phillips's argument in *Sex, Politics and Empire* (2006),³⁷ that a new perspective needs to be formulated when analysing imperial history and geography. 'By ... decentring authors and texts, it has been possible to begin to think beyond binary ... histories and geographies.' (Phillips, *Sex, Politics and Empire*, 77) My readings attempt to demonstrate that the early Indian travellers were selective readers of Orientalist stereotypes. Their variously resistant and co-opted readings of Orientalist discourse move them past Said's deconstruction which only locates them passively within the Orient. My use of reverse Orientalism as a theoretical device will also be fluid in terms of subject matter and geographical locations.

To facilitate this aspect of my argument, I will contextualise these responses by highlighting the preceding and contemporary travel accounts by Europeans of the Orient that were then responded to. The unequal power relations, in terms of geopolitical effect, between these accounts are also acknowledged and accounted for. All of these early travelogues are figured as a cultural form of resistance (even in their co-option of Orientalist discourse). They cannot be compared in terms of imperial ambition and effect to those composed by Francis Buchannan and Reginald Heber, or more broadly, to the bureaucratic texts of Orientalist scholars such as James Mill and William Jones.³⁸ Dialectics of difference between Orient and Occident underpin my thesis, but this does not prevent me from exposing the internal differences and contrasts that permeate the reverse Orientalist accounts of Britain. In my formulations, Orientalism and reverse Orientalism are not absolutely mimetic. During the course of the first chapter, the four writers are each shown to hold individual and contingent positions within the grand structures of class, nation, race and religion, both within India and Britain.

Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin's *The Wonders of Vilayet* (1765)³⁹ represents an historic engagement with the Orientalist project on its own terms, by an Indian, within England. I'tesamuddin highlights how resistance to Western colonial encroachment towards the East was recognised, colluded with and conversely resisted. The text also figures as the first explicit travelogue that reverses the Orientalist journey into a foreign territory which subsequently needs to be rendered intelligible for its own Indian native intellect. I'tesamuddin's travelogue actually predates Reginald Heber's *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India* (1844).⁴⁰ Heber's British travelogue is specifically employed here to explore the forms in which I'tesamuddin appropriates the voice of the conventional Orientalist traveller. Contemporary tension between the Islamic world and the West is also given historical context in the theological divides that I'tesamuddin identifies, mediates between and critiques. Furthermore, Anthony Giddens work is utilised to define the forms in which I'tesamuddin reads and responds to Western modernity.

Dean Mahomed's travelogue is actually set in India and gives a vital exposition of the idea that Orientalism as a discourse could be appropriated and reversed. *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1794)⁴¹ mimes the Orientalist travel account of India, with the crucial distinction being that it is narrated though the eyes of an Indian native: a subtle reversal of the pervading Western orthodoxy. During the course of his travelogue Mahomed assumes a variety of Orientalist positions, all of which are distinguished by the forms in which Orientalist discourse is variously imbibed, regurgitated, and subverted. These reversals are illustrated by my appraisal of Mahomed as a travel writer, ethnographer and cultural pioneer, the last of which is made explicit in his publication of *Shampooing* (1822), a medical treatise on exotic treatments.⁴²

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's travelogue *Westward Bound: The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan* (1810)⁴³ differs from Mahomed in a variety of ways: he composed his writings exclusively in Persian and they were subsequently translated into English; he was a poet who explicitly defined himself as a Muslim and also charted his return journey back to India. His chosen readership is distinguished from the antecedent writers; he wrote for an Oriental audience and thus explicitly wrote back from Europe to India. It is because of this intention that I compare his text to Buchanan's survey travelogue which explicitly sought to render intelligible the Indian landscape for British colonialism. Praise and criticism are juxtaposed in his delineations of Western culture and modernity in a manner that problematises assumed colonial power relations of the time. These have been neglected by both contemporary Orientalists of the period and more modern critics like Said. Abu Taleb's position as a reverse Orientalist is enhanced by the manner in which the Orientalist discourse of exotica is consciously appropriated and reversed.

The final section of this chapter will analyse Behramji Malabari's *The Indian Eye on English Life* (1893).⁴⁴ It is a travelogue which was composed over a hundred years after *The Wonders of Vilayet* (1765) and therefore deals with late Victorian Britain. It also gives an increasing weight to the variety of Indian positions within the reverse Orientalist posturing that wrote back to the centre of the Empire. Malabari was a Parsi reformer in India and ventured to Britain in aid of these reforms that needed the assistance of British power in India to take root. His journey to Britain evokes the interrelation between Orient and Occident during the course of the Empire as he is continuously unable to disentangle himself from his ties to India whilst residing in Britain. His reverse Orientalism does not deal in East and West as mutually exclusive entities. This is illustrated in my foregrounding of him as a

colonial *flaneur* who ventures to find the Orient as resident within the heart of the Empire. I will also further explore the interrelations of the technologies of sex that the Victorian world inculcated within Britain and exported to its colonies.

I acknowledge that Islamic writers are predominant in the narrative thread. Rather than incorporating a wider sample of Indian writers and backgrounds this sample of writers was constructed in order to give circularity to my study, where I could connect these early texts to the specific focus I afford to contemporary Muslim writers in chapter four. Hindu writers such as T.N. Mukharji or A.R. Chatterjee could provide yet more varied and nuanced responses to Orientalism, which could be attributed to their different social positions in caste and religion. These analyses would prove useful in a wider study on these early Indian travellers to Britain. By including Behramji Malabari, I do attempt to give the first chapter a wider ethnic focus. I also recognise that a more sustained critique comparing the early travelogues with their English counterparts, would prove invaluable in building greater understanding in regards to the extent of their subversion of and co-option into Orientalist discourse. This was examined to some extent but I believe such a critical endeavour could be further explored in a specific comparative study. Such an extensive approach is beyond the remit of my study, because my analyses are centred on the early traveller's influences upon Britain and not India. Historically, my study is also conceived on a wider time scale (1770-2010) and thus is not compatible with such a specific critique.

Chapters one and two are deliberately separated, because I wanted to avoid Edward Said's gendered approach which favoured the masculine voice in its deconstruction of Orientalist discourse. The writers analysed in the first chapter

demonstrate an assertive form of masculinity that counters Orientalist descriptions of them as effeminate and submissive. In chapter two, the historical association of the Orient as a feminine terrain conquered by the masculinity of Western imperialism is explored and complicated. First, the presence of Western women in the functioning of Empire is investigated in order to demonstrate the female presence at the heart of Orientalism; both as a discourse and its structural ordering of power. This is not the explicit remit of this chapter; instead, it is to highlight the manner in which Indian women were able to make the opposite journey to the centre of British power and escape many of the Orientalist and exotic assumptions that they had historically been associated with.

Reina Lewis's *Gendering Orientalism* (1996) has proved most useful in constructing a gendered conception of Orientalism, which accounts for the multiplicity of female positions, on both sides of the colonial divide. Sara Mills's *Discourses of Difference* (1991)⁴⁵ and *Gender and Colonial Space* (2005)⁴⁶ call for the separation of Western male and female travel accounts. She objects to the total immersion of female voices and travel texts into a solely patriarchal body of Orientalist discourse. This idiom further complicates Said's unitary idea of Orientalist discourse as a male province. In chapter two, I employ this theoretical shift in order to emphasise the complexity of the female reverse Orientalist response. Indian women also demonstrated agency in the manner in which they responded to Orientalist stereotypes. Their accounts do not unilaterally correspond with their male peers, because they had to navigate the patriarchies of both their Indian cultures and those of their host society in Britain.

Antoinette Burton's feminist work, in both *Burdens of History* (1994)⁴⁷ and *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003),⁴⁸ has also proved invaluable in further unlocking the female voice at the heart of both conventional Orientalism, and its subversion (reverse Orientalism). Burton's ideas, that Western feminist discourse was at some levels shaped and gauged against the place of women in India, further complicates Said's gendered mapping of Orientalist discourse. She also stresses the discernible agency of women like Cornelia Sorabji and Janaki Majumdar to read and respond to feminisms that operated within the wider field of colonial discourse. Memory as a historical device and the domestic archive also constitute a cognitive re-mapping of Said's response to Orientalism; his deconstructive emphasis is placed on the predominantly male public sphere and figured through legal tracts, bureaucratic texts and colonial histories. Inderpal Grewal's *Home and Harem* (1996)⁴⁹ has identified the home as a site of struggle and resistance to colonial discourse. I utilise her conceptual approach by transporting this feminised space to colonial Britain, and re-configuring it as a form of cultural resistance, to both the patriarchies of British Orientalism and Indian nationalism. All of the Indian texts in this chapter resist Orientalist taxonomies that would specify their disenfranchisement; they all actively assert themselves within British cultural and social life.

Pothum Ragaviah's *Pictures of England* (1876),⁵⁰ figures as the first documented account of an Indian lady's journey to, comprehension of and influence upon the heart of the Empire. Her travelogue acts as a direct counterpoint to the Orientalist documents of Flora Annie Steel and Fanny Parkes which were prevalent at the time. It gives needed focus to the ability of Indian women to construct reverse Orientalist accounts of Britain. I will demonstrate how Ragaviah exhibited an awareness of the way India was portrayed by and in the West. In order to reverse

Orientalism, one had to comprehend its parameters, and Ragaviah demonstrates an understanding of Orientalist discourse that has been underestimated in male gendered critiques.

The middle part of the chapter at first focuses on Cornelia Sorabji and her position at the intersection of a variety of overlapping discourses that have historically neglected the presence of subaltern women. These include debates regarding historiography, Orientalist representation of India, patriarchy and the benefits of imperialism. Sorabji will be examined under a microscope that views her as a reverse Orientalist who turned her critical gaze on both the Orient and the Occident, a further complication of the structural binary norms associated with Orientalism as a historical entity. Her writings, most notably *India Calling* (1934) and *India Recalled* (1936), will be analysed for their travelling sensibility, Anglicanism, Indian feminism and hybridity.

The latter part of chapter two will explore the realms of women writing history, a scholarly terrain that has been complicated by the privileging of the public sphere (male/nationalist/Orientalist) over that of the private domain. Janaki Majumdar's *Family History* (1935)⁵¹ was never intended for publication, it is a domestic chronicle as well as a personal diary which charts the movements of the Bonnerjee family between Britain and India. By inserting the text into a thesis of reverse Orientalism I will illustrate that private and personal documents need to be included in historical understandings of a socio-political structure and also Orientalism as a discourse. I will also demonstrate that the familial and private realm, coupled with the archive of memory, can construct needed narratives about

the interrelated development of modernities between Britain and India that can shed new light on the legacies of colonialism, nationalism and Orientalism.

As it focuses on a specific female thread this chapter could also be further enhanced by a comparison to male British Orientalist texts. This would add further weight to my conception of Indian women as reverse Orientalists, who wrote back to the centre of Imperial power. Again, this comparative approach would need to be undertaken within a narrower chronological study that my project consciously moves past. Also, the three female writers I deal with were all relatively elite; their ability to travel to Britain was underpinned by their exalted place within colonial India. I believe that there is genuine scope to look at other less elitist writings that could have been composed; these narratives could unlock yet more varied feminine responses to this period of Orientalism and colonial travel to Britain. However, this approach would require translation, and is thus beyond the disciplinary reach of my project.

In chapter three, I will deal with two Indian writers who give presence to an Indian literary legacy within Britain during a period that has historically been overlooked by cultural critiques.⁵² The immediate pre- and post- World War One social and literary landscape has denied the ability of Indian writers to formulate responses to such a tumultuous period in modern global history that also encompassed World War Two. Nirad Chaudhuri's *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1968)⁵³ begins his conscious engagement with the centre of imperial power and *A Passage to England* (1959)⁵⁴ completes this journey. Along with his journalistic articles, Chaudhuri's historical association with rabid Anglicanism is probed to uncover a reverse Orientalist sensibility that was adept at

turning its critical eye on British influence in India, its Orientalist legacy, and finally upon Britain itself post Empire. Bruce Robbins's plural conception of cosmopolitanism informs my reading of Nirad Chaudhuri's complicated identity, both as an Anglo-centric writer in India, and a Western critic in Britain.

Mulk Raj Anand has generally been viewed as a giant of the Indian-English literary scene. However, I will analyse how this legacy has ignored his position as a cultural and literary commentator on Britain, as opposed to its acknowledged, but specific critique of British imperialism in India. *Across the Black Waters* (2000)⁵⁵ excavates the neglected presence of Indian fighters on the Western front of World War One, where Orientalist certainties were blurred by the 'fog of war.' The incorporation of this novel runs counter to my wider methodological aim to concentrate on non-fiction. However, a critical analysis of *Across the Black Waters* is necessary to explore the aesthetic differences which distinguish Anand's engagement with modernism from that of the Bloomsbury set, which he subsequently recounts in *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1995).⁵⁶ This non-fictional body of essays is the subject of my following critique.

Mulk Raj Anand exhibits a complex relationship with Western (Bloomsbury) modernism in *Across the Black Waters*: this is variously expressed in terms of narrative voice, social engagement, style and language. His work consciously focuses upon 'material reality and not the mystical or religious realm,' consistently found in modernist works by literary figures such as T. S. Eliot.⁵⁷ Anand also consciously strives for 'engagement with the self within the context of a colonial reality rather than the metaphysical world.' (Berman, 'Comparative Colonialisms,' 468) A social realist approach is developed alongside modernist technique in order to

give a voice to the disenfranchised without totally contradicting his credentials as a modernist writer. Consequently, this co-mingling of social realism with modernist technique complicates his relationship with Bloomsbury modernism, which was not as avowedly political in its social engagement. Although Anand vocally challenges the various members of Bloomsbury and their imperial sensibilities in *Conversations*, he does not vocalise his social concerns in the same language used to describe the disenfranchised state of the colonised Indian (soldier/coolie/untouchable) in his novels. Furthermore, in *Conversations*, it is incumbent upon Anand to speak and engage as a Bloomsbury intellectual and modernist, a voice that is beyond the reach of his literary protagonists and outside the remit of his social realism. Consequently, I read *Across the Black Waters* as a literary vehicle to open up the complexity of Anand's socially engaged form of modernism, and as a means of expression to help explain his discursive divergence from key modernist figures such as T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf in *Conversations*. The novel, more explicitly than *Conversations*, allows me to highlight this variance and complexity in terms of narrative voice, style and language.

Conversations in Bloomsbury (1995) also demonstrates a wider intellectual engagement with artistic, cultural and literary concerns evident between the two World Wars; these complicate pre-postcolonial ideas, that such engagements were absent. Alessandro Portelli's theories on the layered and unstable nature of oral histories are utilised, in order to distinguish between Mulk Raj Anand's consciously subjective recollections of his time spent in Bloomsbury and the narrative certainty that characterises Orientalist discourse. By presenting a subjective and provisional response to the dogmatism of the Bloomsbury elite, I also strive on a broader level, to escape the universal deconstructions of Western Orientalism which Edward Said

employs. His analysis of Orientalism presents it as a monolithic Western construct. My reverse Orientalisms, which write back to the Empire, are acknowledged as contingent, hybridised (East and West) and individual. This intricate character of discursive response is what connects them, and also distinguishes them from Said's universal tendencies in *Orientalism* which defines all Orientalist discourse as an exercise in Occidental power over the Orient. It also situates Orientalist discourse in the hands of the Western Orientalist only. In this respect Said can be viewed to reinscribe the binary distinctions between East and West in the process of deconstructing them.

A significant non-fictional female written text could not be located to suit the time frame this chapter works through. Sorabji and Majumdar's texts are composed in this period, but, are included in chapter two and thus excluded. I recognise that a female writer, such as Kamala Markandaya, would have given the chapter more balance in terms of gender; however, this would have meant including fiction in my analyses and this was consciously excluded from my methodology. Chronologically, the gap between chapters three and four could also have been filled with a later writer, but one could not be found that would have corresponded with the theoretical concerns of the two writers dealt with. Chaudhuri's later writings in his edited collections mask this chronological gap. Elements regarding Oriental reaction to World War One, touched upon in this chapter, would also provide the basis for a more specific and expanded literary study upon Indian responses to World War One within Europe. Again, this would have required the wider inclusion of poetry as a genre within my thesis, and this model was not explicitly included in my forms of analysis.⁵⁸

The final chapter will do something not explicated in the chapters that precede it. I will focus on a specific strand of the Orientalist logic; the suspicion of Islam and the Islamic world that now figures as the primary example of the uncivilised anti-West that needs intervention. As I have mentioned before, this emphasis on contemporary Muslim writers and their counter-cultural texts connects them to the Islamic travellers analysed in the first chapter. Strategically, this circular model of writers gives my conception of a British-Asian literary response to Orientalism, over the last three hundred years both needed focus and consistency. In contemporary times Islam has come to symbolise the explicit Orient of Orientalist epistemologies and ontologies. This vividly demonstrates that the legacy of Orientalist discourse has endured and continues to find new and old forms in which to express itself. At first, my focus is centred on secularised Muslim writers whose presence and influence within British literature has been presented as evidence of the ability of British society to reclaim an internal Oriental Other.

Salman Rushdie and his relationship with Islam has been notoriously fraught since the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988)⁵⁹ and the subsequent furore needs to be analysed for its influence in the polarisation of public opinion surrounding Islam's place within the British social body. This is analysed through his collected articles in the publications of *Imaginary Homelands* in 1991⁶⁰ and *Step Across This Line* in 2002.⁶¹ Hanif Kureishi's *The Word and the Bomb* (2005)⁶² deals explicitly with the conflicts and tensions which now exist between the West and Islam, both globally and locally within a British context, after tragedies such as 'September 11th', the 'July 7th' bombings in London, and the Iraq war. Both these writers have been lauded for their engagement with post-colonial ideas of diaspora, home, hybridity and identity. Instead, in chapter four I will locate them within the Orientalist polarity

of Islam and the West (Islamophobia), where their writings have helped to mediate and provoke questions about how such conflicts can be negotiated in the future.

In Ed Husain's *The Islamist* (2007),⁶³ this fear of Islam, and its extremist manifestations are laid bare. His memoir demonstrates that Islamism can act as the most explicit and dangerous form of reverse Orientalism. For this reason, I argue that Islamic faith and practice within Britain needs to be analysed more sensitively in both their historical, local and contemporary contexts. The following writer Sarfraz Manzoor's memoir, *Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock 'n' Roll* (2007),⁶⁴ mediates between these restructuring polarities of Islam and the West by illustrating that there is place for a moderate third space that can evade the dogmatisms of Orientalism (Islamophobia) and reverse Orientalism (Islamism) in their extremist forms. Imran Ahmad's *Unimagined* (2007)⁶⁵ echoes the difficulties of this cultural, religious and social navigation in modern Britain. It also exposes an Orientalist process that has been deliberately ignored in some polarising depictions of Islam in Britain; that of its relationship with Christianity and its subsequent position of inferiority within modern British society.⁶⁶ The aim of this chapter is to ultimately demonstrate that the Orientalist dichotomies of East and West are finding new forms and forums in which to express their age old certainties. A process of reverse Orientalism exhibited by the writers who are studied has had varied success in dealing with them.

Ziauddin Sardar's *Orientalism* (1999)⁶⁷ provides a cogent theoretical framework, which identifies Islam and the Islamic world as the foremost culture and terrain consistently framed by Western Orientalist discourse. This historical approach goes some way towards explaining the reconstituted specificity of neo-

Orientalist antagonism towards Islamic cultural practices within contemporary Britain. Consequently, my decision to focus on Islam is in part an acknowledgement of the validity of his critical designs. Conversely, Samuel Huntington's provocative thesis in *The Clash of Civilizations* (2002)⁶⁸ also informs my decision to focus specifically upon Islam and the West, as opposed to other areas within the broader field of Orientalist studies. Elizabeth Poole's *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (2002)⁶⁹ investigates the manner in which Orientalist discourse has been specifically reformulated for Islam and Islamic people, both locally and globally. This intervention has provided my examinations with a modern context for the forms in which Orientalism operates. Bhikhu Parekh's 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press; Some Salutory Lessons' (1990),⁷⁰ goes some way to explaining the prejudiced manner in which British Muslims can be culturally profiled in Britain. His article is extremely informative in regards to locating the specific forms in which Orientalism continues to frame Islam as backward, irrational and uncivilised; Oriental in other words. This emphasis on modern media's collusion with Orientalist discourse is made by Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1997)⁷¹ in a broader sense; however, my study specifically investigates its effects within Britain and how Muslim writers have responded to them.

Poole's British study has also provided my work with a theoretical framework in which to probe a shift in racist ideology towards British Muslims. To some extent, cultural and religious practices have replaced racial markings when Islam and Islamophobia (neo-Orientalism) intersect within Britain. By demonstrating the varied response of British Muslims to cultural profiling, I complicate Said's deconstruction of Orientalism. Although he stresses the intricacy of Muslim peoples,

he does not account for the varied manner in which individual Muslims can be viewed to reject or corroborate the universalising logics of Orientalist discourse. For example, Islamism monolithically frames the West in absolute terms as unchaste, materialistic and morally bankrupt. The symmetrical ideological designs of Orientalism and Islamism are connections he does not explore in detail. Bobby S. Sayyid's conceptual framework in *A Fundamental Fear* (1997)⁷² was a key theoretical device from which I could explore the clear parallels between elements of Orientalist and Islamist discourse.

Bhikhu Parekh's nuanced and multi-faceted conception of how to construct a successful model for social relations in *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (2000)⁷³ has also conceptually informed my ideas of textual resistance to the forms of cultural monism that Orientalism, Islamism and Islamophobia demand. Husain, Manzoor and Ahmad's identity formations are subject to these competing discourses, but their resolutions to these demands reflect both the complexity of establishing a multiple British identity, and the danger of rejecting cultural hybridity in the modern globalised world. Both Manzoor and Ahmad in particular, are able to formulate multiple British identities, which are a complex mixture of cultural (Islamic) affiliations and integrated British sensibilities. These fluid identity formations require what Stuart Hall has termed a 'new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses difference.'⁷⁴ It is from within this paradigm, that my conception of reverse Orientalism is formulated. I do not seek to perpetuate the polarised thinking of Orientalism (Islamophobia) or its unilateral deconstruction. Said's thesis in *Orientalism*, as Aijaz Ahmed has pointed out, fails to acknowledge the possibility that some forms of Orientalism were predicated on a genuine desire to construct cross-cultural understanding.

My paradigmatic shift, in regards to this discursive dialogue, is constructed around the idea that British Asian writers have also been able to use elements of Orientalist discourse (exotica/social reform) to facilitate cross-cultural conversations. These have allowed them to develop pluralised ideas of Britishness that can come into conflict with and variously avoid binary systems of thought (Islamism/Islamophobia). Tariq Modood's work on Islam's place within British multiculturalism in ⁷⁵ has also proved useful to my framing of a pluralised British Muslim identity (Manzoor and Ahmad) in chapter four. This identity accepts both its formation in transit, and the competing demands placed on it by religion and Western secularism. His approach has allowed me to formulate a polyvalent British Muslim identity within the wider field of black cultural plurality. Crucially, this recognition of fluid ethnicities distinguishes my readings of the writers from the polarisations of Islamophobia and Edward Said's universalising deconstructions of Western Orientalism.

The absence of Muslim women's non fiction in the final chapter could also look to be addressed in further studies. Female testimonials of the post-colonial and post 9/11 world, which has seen the rise of Islamophobia and Islamism, could provide a nuanced and sensitive understanding of the greater inequalities they face as a disempowered group. My research will demonstrate that the cultural and social role of women plays a significant part in the discursive constructions of both, Islamism and neo-Orientalism. Their disempowered status within their own ethnic community and wider Britain could be analysed in a broader sample of writers which was beyond the scope of my project. A non-fictional version of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003)⁷⁶ could not be located within the time frame in which I wrote. But I do recognise that this critical gap, as a sphere of analysis, can now begin to be tackled.

There is a growing body of non-fictional texts across the West (U.S.A, Europe, Australia), which are beginning to market the particularities of being a disenfranchised Muslim woman; these can now be studied within a different geographical or generic model.⁷⁷ Prospective studies could also look to incorporate fiction and other minority female writers, who have addressed similar issues (Islam, Terrorism) within Britain, such as Zadie Smith and her novel *White Teeth* (2007).⁷⁸

Chapter One – Early Settlers

The primary concern of this chapter is to demonstrate that immigration movements into Britain such as the Windrush generation of the 1950s and the large influx of labour from the Indian subcontinent in the decades following it were by no means the genesis of Britain's inception as a culturally diverse society. The travels of ayahs, Lascars, servants and princes 'stretches back to the founding of the East India Company in 1600.'⁷⁹ When investigating the various tactics and manoeuvres colonised people had available to them we are able to see that the dynamics of Orientalism were far from the monologue that has been historically presented, by both critics like Said and also Orientalists themselves. These scholars have given far too little attention to the presence and contribution of early Indian settlers in Britain; travellers who escape the ontological and teleological definitions generally associated with subcontinental peoples' entry into and influence upon Britain. This raises the question that if Orientalism as a very structure rests upon basic dialogical distinctions between colony/metropole, coloniser/colonised and ultimately Orient/Occident, how are these definitions able to be defended against a process which demonstrates that such pure definitions can be viewed as overly simplistic? I would contest that such distinctions disallow the idea that British society and its cultural modernity were intrinsically constituted by a multitude of influences and contestations from Indian settlers and travellers who have 'been travelling to or settling in Britain since the early 1600s,' a legacy Michael H. Fisher has termed 'Counterflows to Colonialism.'⁸⁰

The work of Rozina Vizram, Michael H. Fisher and Shompa Lahiri has been invaluable in unlocking the possibilities of what I have labelled reverse Orientalism. This term is offered as a definition for a process where Indian writers have utilised the tropes of classic Orientalism to create immigrant spaces within Britain. It is for this reason that I have not labelled it Occidentalism, as that indicates that such a process would have to be an identical twin of the colonial project. Such a conception could not sustain itself in macro terms politically, militaristically or economically, as India never invaded Britain, appropriated and exported its material wealth or installed itself as the 'Indian Monarchy' in the way Britain was able to identify itself as the British Raj. This project aims to identify the Orient within Britain itself and also argue that Indian travellers and settlers engaged in similar 'Orientalising' projects to render Britain intelligible for the Indian mind, in ways that deconstructed the normal power relations associated with not only the high colonial period but also the pre- and post-colonial eras. Michael H. Fisher argues that such a contra flow of knowledges can be traced back to the beginning of the seventeenth century when Anglocentric depictions of the Orient were beginning to be accumulated and disseminated by the rapidly expanding print media in Britain. However, a process 'less noticed by historians, [was that] Indian travellers and settlers in Britain also contributed incrementally to this body of knowledge about themselves and their homelands.' (Fisher, *Counterflows*, 5)

This chapter will outline a process where colonialism was not a simple and uncontested set of relations, there were contrasts as well as correlatives in the way Britons and Indians came to view each other and define themselves. In the present chapter I will argue that these representations were constantly being remoulded and recapitulated over time:

Colonialism was not hegemonic or dichotomous between colonizer and colonized. Rather, there were multiple sites of contestation and cooperation as well as inconsistencies and contradictions among both Britons and Indians. Further patterns of exchange and knowledge production were asymmetrical and occurred differently in Britain and India, and shifted over time. (Fisher, *Counterflows*, 13)

Thus, my primary objective is to demonstrate how early travellers to Britain both contested and moulded their identities as Indians but also contested them as Britons, within Britain nearly two centuries before terms such as British Asian became generally received. To do this, I am going to analyse specifically the travel writings of four Indian writers who differ relatively in terms of their class, religion and outlook. By adopting this approach, I will be building on the studies of Rozina Vizram (who adopts a historical approach) and Michael H. Fisher (who combines both a historical and literary focus) in their appraisal of these early Indian immigrants and their co-histories of India and Britain.

I will concentrate my analysis on four main writers: Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin, Sake Dean Mahomed, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Behramji Malabari, all of whom wrote on various topics concerning Britain's relationship with India in Britain and the subcontinent itself. I will also analyse the interrelated development of colonialism and how identities on both sides were shaped by these engagements in complex ways, and how these micro fashionings mirrored the moulding of British-Indian relations and ultimately of British society in macro terms. The use of the travelogue was an especially effective medium in which to navigate these dialogical flows of colonialism and the subsequent development of modernity. James Clifford has argued for travel to be viewed as constitutive of cultural formations and practices, not merely as a signifier for simple transfer or extension; an awareness where 'cultural centres, discrete regions and territories, do not exist prior to contacts,

but are sustained through them, appropriating and disciplining the restless movements of people and things.’ (Clifford, *Routes*, 3) In the following section, I will explore how these writers were able to appropriate the very terms and parameters of Western modernity, selectively deploying and contesting its epistemologies. The Indian travelogues and their incumbent ethnographic and anthropological designs contrast with European Orientalist portrayals of Indians at the time, and also counter-historicise the hitherto neglected presence of Indians in the metropole:

These Indian travel narratives must be understood in their own terms, not merely as “other” to, or imitative of, European ones. The production and consumption of these earliest Indian travel narratives about Europe thus reveal some of the complex ways that specific groups in Indian society engaged with early modernity.⁸¹

The following section will first examine the British travel narrative as a genre and its use as a conduit of colonial knowledge for British writers who circulated ‘Oriental’ knowledges within Britain. Subsequently, however, I will showcase how writers such as Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin, Dean Mahomed, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Behramji Malabari were able to reverse the Orientalists’ nexus of knowledge/power whilst adopting similar forms.

Travel Writing and Colonialism

In any investigation of these Indian travelogues it is necessary to locate their British context, a factor which positions their accounts against the conventional European travelogue of the Orient. During the expanding wave of European commercial activity which was to lead Britain and India into the high colonial period there was a raft of travel accounts about the Orient by European writers: representations of the 'East' that were couched within Romantic conceptions of the 'exotic,' 'picturesque' and 'sublime.' These travelogues were designed to allow the British reader to access new worlds, to make journeys 'imaginatively' across spaces that were deemed to be dangerous or too expensive. Various forms of travel literature became the vogue during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: travel accounts of actual geographical descriptions were written, imbued with scientific data, notations of landscapes, wildlife and fauna, anthropological analyses of indigenous peoples and most famously, travel novels which most imaginatively engaged with the expanding possibilities of both the new and old worlds. Texts such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) invited the reader to construct a foreign terrain within the mental geography of their own world. The premier conventions within this genre of the period were the aristocratic grand tour, the picturesque modality and the survey, which all allowed access to avenues where the coloniser was either examining the lands that had been conquered or laying the groundwork for future colonial assaults.

The work of the Romanticists and Asiatic researchers had done much to stoke the curiosity of the British reader as to the true nature of the Orient; this body of research both directly and indirectly led to a spate of travelogues from sources as

varied as government administrators, aristocrats, military men and missionaries, most of whom but not all displayed romantic enthusiasm for India.⁸² These voyages were written not only as spatial journeys but temporalised in a manner, Said would argue, that framed the Orient in alien and backward terms. Nigel Leask states that the picturesque format was especially pertinent in this antiquated fashioning of the Orient, because ‘the picturesque landscape is also a *past* landscape which manifests the ruinous agency of time.’⁸³ The idea of the picturesque intrinsically privileged the subjectivity of the reporter (British) over its object (Indian), as it was the reporter who chose what to freeze (report) and transport back to the colony. Leask has labelled this process ‘the stabilization of bourgeois European subjectivity in the discourse of travel ... [where] the Indian picturesque translated sensibility into the personal nostalgia of the imperial viewer.’ (Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 175-76) Thus, the travel picturesque was a form that allowed the writer to create not just the alien landscape but home as well. Leask affirms that ‘at the very moment at which it split the British eye from the Indian landscape, the picturesque sutured together the colonial and metropolitan vision, eliciting a lachrymose nostalgia as the present landscape dissolved in sentimental memories of home and childhood.’ (Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 175) This dynamic establishes the fluidity and imaginative endeavour that existed between the colony and the metropole: that the traveller’s experiences were far from impartial and unable to sustain pretensions of scientific fact. Instead, they were highly individual stories and snapshots of a deeply contested colonial world, where colony became home and home could become the colony.

The survey modality was far more explicit in its imperial designs, with its relentless drive to categorise the Orient geographically and ethnographically. The

main purpose was to place it on a map of global politics that rendered it visible in Western terms, but always different in essence, a dichotomous narrative that could be read within an ever-expanding notion of Western modernity. Edward Said argues that the travel writer's main purpose was to write the Orient as something distinct from the Occident, to distinguish between borders and boundaries. To render travel accounts that explicitly differentiated between two worlds: 'in other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and unfamiliar space which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary.'⁸⁴ The European travel genre not only gave form to this series of dialectics, it also functioned as a facilitator by actually creating the place in which it travelled.

Said proclaims that 'the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for his [own] culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental.' (Said, *Orientalism*, 67) He delineates a process where the intrepid European traveller actually narrated deeply personalised accounts of their travels, attributes that were far removed from the objective aims of the traveller/reporter that rested on the premise of eyewitness testimony and transportation of actual lived experience. Tabish Khair would agree with Said's paradigm here, in the sense that the traveller narrativised his account of the Orient into objective reality because he could, that the geopolitics of colonialism with its incumbent economic, militaristic and technological superiority allowed it to be realised. Khair directly attributes this dynamic to the rise of print capitalism, a dynamic that aided the erasure of alternative documents of travel within Europe. He states that because of this dynamic, travel writing and its documentation have always been about the 'gaze of

power. It is this that helps explain how the movements of some (non-European) peoples were effectively frozen under that narrative gaze, even when European travellers noted the presence of non-European travellers in the margins of their texts.’⁸⁵

Leask, in his study of romantic travel writing, argues that modernity and the decreasing space of the global village in the nineteenth century played a huge role in the expanding market for imaginative travel writing within Britain:

By the 1820s the consolidation of Europe’s global power and improved technologies of travel increasingly disenchanted distance; in consequence, the traveller’s subjective reflections often seemed more interesting than descriptions of the lands through which they travelled, so that travel narratives became *more* rather than less ‘literary’ in the modern sense of the term. (Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 7)

Leask agrees with Said to the extent that depictions of the ‘East’ were imaginative and rhetorical in their function. However, he disagrees with the notion of the traveller and his text being completely subsumed within Orientalist discourse in the way Said would have one believe. Instead, Leask emphasises the instability of European accounts where he asks for an approach that avoids representing ‘Europe’s encounter with its ‘other’s’ as a Manichean opposition of power and innocence [but rather stresses] the contingency of (and often confusion) which determined the ‘cultural entanglements’ of European travellers in diverse times and places.’ (Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 16) This approach allows the ‘native’ a relative degree of agency in the way their worlds were constructed for the West, at the same time as undercutting the Orientalist’s pretensions of authenticity, truth and wholeness. The idea that European travel discourse was imbued with native resistance in its very conception and subsequent transportation opens the possibilities for a reverse Orientalism to be conceptualised, as contingency and flux allow for

strategies of response, re-evaluation, dialogue and ultimately for new stories to be told.

Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992) marked a major shift in the way travel literature has been viewed in post-colonial studies. She identifies a space where the contingency and mutability of travel discourse could be conceptualised, a meeting place she conceives of as the 'contact zone.' A dynamic of colonial relations she labels as 'an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctives, and whose trajectories now intersect.' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7) Pratt establishes a paradigm that allows for interstitial relations to be mutually engendering, where relations among 'colonizer and colonized, or travellers and "travelees", [are] not [comprehended] in terms of separateness and apartheid, but in terms of ... interactions, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7) She states that within the discourse of travel writing, transculturation was not only accessible but explicitly derivative of the contact zone:

Ethnographers have used this term to describe how sub-ordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated peoples cannot control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for. Transculturation is a phenomenon of the contact zone. (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6)

What she proposes is a dynamic of exchange that acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations of colonialism but leaves the door ajar for native peoples to formulate effective responses that either subvert the Orientalist's imperial intentions in the colony or moulds them in order to ameliorate them within their own cultures, according to their own dictates and rules.

Pratt's text, however, limits the Orientals' response to resting within the colony without delineating a process of transculturation that can be reversed and placed within the imperial metropole itself. The following section will demonstrate that there were colonised peoples who were able to make the opposite journey to the ones showcased by European travel writers. The 'contact zone' and its derivative discourses of transculturation were not just phenomena of the colonised world at the periphery, but such discursive possibilities and practices also filtered through to the imperial centre. Tabish Khair has stated that current definitions of travel writing and 'exploration' tie the discourse of travel to the grand narrative of European expansion and colonisation, to the point where contrary movements have been erased from existence. Khair contends that when one 'employs the word "travel" in an anglophone context, one is struck by the extent to which it represents not sight but blindness. The travels of entire peoples sometimes within Europe, but often outside European and Eurocentric spaces have been erased.' (Khair, *Other Routes*, 5) This study is an effort to reinscribe these movements within a revised narrative of interrelations that privileges neither Eurocentric hegemony nor Oriental separation. Clifford argues that notions of centrality and the peripheral in identity formation are always tactical, that 'stasis and purity are asserted creatively and violently *against* historical forces of movement and contamination.' (Clifford, *Routes*, 7) Thus, he too would agree that the modernising European world was also transculturated, it too had to actively select what it absorbed and imbibed from different and foreign cultures, a cultural paradigm that problematises modernity as being a Western concept *tout court*.

My argument is predicated on the idea that Indian writers in Britain were able to appropriate the tools of the coloniser and use them for their own means to create

new forms of cultural identities and colonial modernities. However, it does acknowledge that such responses were shaped by a variety of external forces, thus rendering it impossible for those accounts to be completely symmetrical responses to the intrinsic inequity of the colonial world. I will stress that writers such as Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin, Dean Mahomed, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Behramji Malabari all displayed varying types of resistance: some to a greater extent than others, some with different motivations, and some more sympathetic to British rule than their counterparts. They also do not form a monolithic branch of reverse Orientalists: each had their own subjective positions within the hierarchies of class, nation, religion and race, both within India and Britain. Each had highly complex and fissiparous relations with their patrons, across that global divide. All four engaged with a variety of topics and themes prevalent in the day: such as the nature of the family, sexual politics, technologies of capitalism and a variety of other contestations that raged around the formation of new modernities before, during and towards the end of the Victorian age. Inderpal Grewal in her study *Home and Harem* (1996) argues that travel is 'more than a trope, travel is a metaphor that ... became an ontological discourse central to the relations between self and other, between different forms of alterity, between nationalisms, women, races and classes.' (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 4) The following section will investigate the different ways the aforementioned writers used the travel genre as an access point in writing about the deeper issues surrounding colonial politics that were both mimetic and resistant.

The Munshi and the Orientalist Project

The Wonders of Vilayet was written by Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin in 1765. It was originally composed in Persian and has only recently been translated (2002) into English by Kaiser Haq, a Bengali scholar who has made the claim that the travelogue is one of the first 'modern' accounts of the West by a non-Western writer.⁸⁶ Mirza I'tesamuddin's original Persian text was never actually published; the first version that made it to press was a translation by James Edward Alexander, an old India hand in 1827.⁸⁷ This was followed by a Bengali translation of the text in 1981 by the late professor A.B.M. Habibullah, entitled *Vilayetnama (Tales of Vilayet)*, which acts as the source material for Kaiser Haq's translation. Haq's translation is the object of my study. Kaiser Haq has listed the likely birth date for Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin as 1730 and has registered his death around 1800, though both times are approximate and not definitive dates.⁸⁸ I'tesamuddin completed his education under the tutelage of a Munshi called Salimullah who was employed in Mir Jafar's court, the then Nawab of Bengal. He was bestowed the title Mirza as recognition for his service to both the Emperor Shah Alam II and his long period of employment within the East India Company.⁸⁹ Whilst under the East India 'Company's employ ... [I'tesamuddin] was [actually] involved in the diplomatic manoeuvres connected with the [Anglo-] Maratha wars.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 18)

The basis for the text's composition was predicated on this political interface. He was despatched to Britain, on behalf of Shah Alam II, in order to secure further British military assistance to repel what was an increasingly hostile political situation. Both the Marathas and Shujauddowla, threatened Shah Alam's North Indian power base:

Fresh troubles ensued when the Shujauddowla joined hands with the Mahratta Chief Malhar Rao against the Emperor Shah Alam. Shujauddowla advanced to Kulpi and Malhar Rao attacked Kora-Jahanabad with 50,000 horsemen. [The British] Colonel Carnac ... was ordered to aid the Emperor, [and] marched from Faizabad. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 18)

Shah Alam's letter was sent to Britain along with a gift of 100,000 rupees; it also required a learned and nuanced interpreter of the Persian language, which I'tesamuddin was deemed the most suitable candidate. Thus, the travelogue was composed against the backdrop of the emerging colonial system and acts as a significant and important discovery in the history of 'modern' accounts of Britain and Europe. The concept of Otherness is delineated along a 'reverse Orientalist' axis, where the erudite Indian scholar places the West and the Orientalist project under the analytical microscope.

An important detail regarding I'tesamuddin is the fact that he was not a colonial citizen; he was positioned within the Indian elite at a time when Britain had not yet imposed complete colonial status upon the subcontinent. This allowed I'tesamuddin to compose a travelogue that could judge Western society outside the rigours of colonial discourse. He was part of an elite and his exalted social position allowed him to express a confidence and belligerence in his dealings with the West, within a relational dynamic that would have been a lot more difficult to maintain under the more defined social stratifications of the high colonial period. His engagement with Western society leads him to express both the humanity and prejudices of his native culture, a dynamic that marks him out as a 'foreign' subject and traveller. I'tesamuddin acknowledges his foreign status whilst also understanding that his social position is altered once he enters into Britain. He states:

Though I am considered well born in my country a well born Englishwoman cannot consider a union with a foreigner of a different religion. Likewise, an

Englishwoman of an inferior class might be willing to marry me, but I wouldn't have her. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 100)

I'tesamuddin sets the subtext of his travels on a self-conscious foreign setting, emphasising his outsider status without relegating himself down the ladder of civilisation, and thus 'others' himself, gaining control of the self/other dialectic in the process.

The beginning of the travelogue outlines his narrative in a dual format. First, he gives his own reasons for travel but then also expounds on the history of European imperial expansion over the subcontinent. Personal and public details are both deliberately and self-consciously intertwined within the narrative. I'tesamuddin can be viewed as extremely prescient in his understanding of the economic drive that underpinned the imperial enterprise that was beginning to define East/West politics during the eighteenth century. Just as he is sent to the West on a geopolitical mission, so too the West encroaches on the East for the same political and economic motivations. He exclaims that the 'Firinghees began thinking of searching out a sea route to the East so that their ships could trade directly with these regions.'⁹⁰ (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 21) In this statement, I'tesamuddin makes his investment in a modern account of imperial politics, he understands the profit motive that was beginning to drive world politics and would eventually result in the colonial system. I'tesamuddin immediately demonstrates his awareness of the burgeoning imperial project, inter-European rivalries and the increasing power of Britain in India. He declares: 'historians tell us that just as the English are now more famous than all other nations, the Portuguese were once prominent among the Christian Kingdoms for their wealth and military might.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 21) In this dynamic, he assumes the position of an historian who

is reordering Western history for the Indian reader, questioning the British hegemony in India that portrayed itself in Orientalist terms as inevitable and uninhibited, and emphasising a version of imperial history that was in flux and open to change.

In foregrounding I'tesamuddin's rewritten version of the Orientalist text, one must place him firstly within the Orientalist project itself. In the text he makes mention of William Jones and his compilation of the Persian grammar. I'tesamuddin proclaims that it was his own knowledge and influence in the construction of this Orientalist knowledge that was intrinsic to its efficacy. In referring to a translation of a nameless Persian text into English by Captain Swinton with the help of his own erudition, I'tesamuddin overtly claims that this translation directly contributed and underpinned William Jones's *Persian Grammar* (1804):⁹¹

Captain Swinton with my help read the whole of the *Kuleelah wa Dumnah* and translated into English the section of the *Ferhung Jehangaree* that sets out the twelve rules comprising the grammar of the Persian language. Mr Jones saw that translation and with Captain Swinton's permission used it in compiling his Persian Grammar, which has brought him fame and money. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 72)

Paradigmatically, I'tesamuddin highlights a fissure in colonial discourse here. He demonstrates that such knowledge constructions and productions were far from unilateral, where they were created by the West for the West. Instead, I'tesamuddin reveals that they were produced through a litany of connections, contributions and overlaps that colonial and Orientalist discourse has historically obstructed from view.

In being able to offer a counter reading of Britain, I'tesamuddin highlights his awareness of the intricacies of the colonial world, a subjectivity that has historically been denied to Indian accounts of the West in the mid eighteenth century. One must acknowledge that the weight of Orientalist scholarship and its

fermenting of imperialist logics were still in their embryonic stages at the time I'tesamuddin was writing. However, he does presciently identify the Saidian dynamic that Orientalism was shaped as much as an intellectual and academic project as it was realised in economic, political and militaristic terms. I'tesamuddin explains how 'Firinghee scholars compiled guidebooks for the use of Firinghee nations; these comprised sea-charts and maps indicating the salient features of South Asia.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 22) Furthermore, I'tesamuddin emphasises that the discourses of Western imperialism and modernity fed into and out of each other. Stating that the British 'engage in researches in science, medicine and technology, make scholarly studies in fields like history and philosophy, seek means to improve the efficiency of factories and machinery, and write books so that mankind may benefit from their discoveries' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 126), he also connects this knowledge with the power of the British to use such knowledges to establish dominion over the subcontinent and its local seats of power: 'those who only yesterday were supplicants for forty bighas of land are today masters of one half of India and have brought to their knees a host of proud and arrogant chieftains.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 26) On the hoarding of Oriental art, he re-emphasises this point: 'one of the libraries [in Britain] contained many superb statues and pictures by old masters. These had been purchased from abroad, some for as much as ten thousand Rupees.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 72) In this paradigm, I'tesamuddin demonstrates an incredible awareness of the burgeoning Orientalist project, both in regards to the way the Orient was collected and then re-projected in the West for the Western reader imaginatively, as much as in material terms. Thus, I'tesamuddin as a reverse Orientalist sets out to correct and alter these projections by offering an alternative account of the

development of the Orientalist project that preceded and produced the colonial world.

The narrative can be viewed in a way that dismantles the seamless narrative of Western pedagogy that sought to define imperialism as welcomed, necessary and ultimately inevitable. I'tesamuddin hints at the corrupting and corrosive elements of the imperial enterprise whilst also unlocking a perspective of imperial history that would not have been present in contemporary Western textbooks. He alludes to the exploitation that was inherent in the building of the imperialist project, when he states that 'the Portuguese and other Firinghees took advantage of the corruption [of local leaders] and with presents of expensive European goods and large bribes, easily persuaded local officials to turn a blind eye while they built their fortresses.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 23) The travelogue also conveys a narrative plot which beneath the surface emphasises the inherent exploitation of the imperialist project.

At the beginning of the memoir, I'tesamuddin chides Lord Robert Clive for failing to join the voyage to England for which the pretext of his own visit was to act as an interpreter for him in presenting the Shah's monetary gift and letter to the King for military assistance. I'tesamuddin immediately expresses his discomfort and unease at Lord Clive's absence when stating: 'I was struck dumb by this information and clearly realised that a deep game was afoot, in which the journey was a mere pretext.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 20) The pretext is eventually fleshed out when he comments at the end of the travelogue that 'when Lord Clive eventually returned to England he presented the emperor's gift in his own name, thereby obtaining an abundant share of royal favour, and made no mention of the

letter.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 143) In manipulating the situation for his own favour, Lord Clive acts as a personification of the exploitation of the imperial project that deliberately erased such political manoeuvrings from Orientalist accounts of colonial and pre-colonial history. This paradigm can be viewed as representative of imperialism as a whole, where political and economic trade in the shape of the East India Company evolved into the complete domination of India by Britain under false pretences. I’tesamuddin’s documentation can be viewed as a historic account, due to the time frame in which he wrote, as a counter-narrative to Western hegemonic grand discourses and an important counter analysis of the development of colonialism. Further investigations need to be made into the ability of subaltern figures to be both actors and critics of the pre-colonial period in Britain as well as India, from which the colonial system evolved.

In these convictions, I’tesamuddin offers a rewritten version of early Anglo/Euro-Indian encounters, hinting at a far longer history of Indian agitation against Western rule than has historically been accounted for, in the realms of literature as opposed to active political rebellion. In a passage regarding Alexander the Great and his navigational exploits, he expands on this criticism of Western historical accounts that sought to airbrush alternative histories from the gradient of civilisations’ development and progress. He notes: ‘European savants claim that Arabic and Persian histories have relied mainly on hearsay and incorporated contradictory accounts of the same incident. Consequently their writings have no more significance than fairy tales.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 29) I’tesamuddin expounds a dynamic here that exposes Western hegemony over the documenting of world history and thus strives to delineate an alternative account that re-routes Orientalist questioning of Oriental histories and reverses such an analytical

gaze back on to the West. This is typified in how he re-characterises the qualities of Alexander the Great outside of Western historical definitions:

[European textbooks] describe him as a model of justice, whereas in reality he was a tyrant. He practiced no religion and went as far as to claim he was a god, yet he has been called a pious man, even a prophet. He was a characterless debauchee who has been described as a virtuous celibate. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 29)

Alexander in I'tesamuddin's account can be viewed as a metaphorical figure who personifies Western epistemologies that conflated singular European accounts with objective globalised histories. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have argued that writers like I'tesamuddin and later Abu Taleb represent an Indo–Persian corpus of knowledges that were also highly significant representations of the world, whether distant or proximate, and thus signpost a process where Euro-centric globalised histories need to be evaluated alongside alternative world views.⁹²

In placing I'tesamuddin's travelogue as a modern account of pre-colonial relations, a significant strain of the text is centred on the technological superiority of the West, and his narrative is actually effusive in its praise of the benefits of certain elements of modernity. In this respect, his memoir intertwines criticisms of the West in certain regards with a respect for the culture of endeavour and enterprise that was driving technological advances in European countries:

Not only are Europeans very able navigators, but they endeavour continuously to increase their competency. The new skills and knowledge they acquire are simplified and systematised, so that they might easily be taught to novices. This they do not only in the case of navigational science but of other branches of learning as well. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 34)

I'tesamuddin emphasises that it is this cultural attribute that is at the heart of Western hegemony. He ascribes this 'trait as peculiar to Europeans. Their courage and industry have made them the most powerful race on earth.' (I'tesamuddin, *The*

Wonders of Vilayet, 34) Paradigmatically, I'tesamuddin does delineate an East/West axis in much the same form as the Western scholar/Orientalist. However, in assuming the gaze of analysis and in reversing the gaze back onto the imperial centre he does not allow himself to be continually subsumed within Manichean oppositions. He protects his own cultural roots with confidence but is not afraid to criticise his own cultural heritage as well as offering praise for his host culture. The following section will analyse this balanced dynamic in I'tesamuddin's text in more depth as well as investigate his travelling subjectivity, where the conventions of the Orientalist travelogue are unconsciously appropriated, modified and reformulated.

The Wonders of England

I'tesamuddin's memoir and travelogue exhibit a clear awareness of the Orientalist's travelling sensibility, much of the conventions of the contemporary travelogue are aped and then reinterpreted through his own eyes. The title of the memoir itself conforms to an Orientalist paradigm in that it emphasises the idea of awe and wonder, both crucial elements of the picturesque travelogue. As opposed to later nineteenth century Indian travelogues of Britain and Europe, I'tesamuddin had no prior mental map imprinted in his mind telling him how England ought to be seen. Thus, I'tesamuddin exhibits a genuine sense of curiosity that lends his orientation towards Britain and Europe as genuinely unique and pioneering. But it also gives his subjectivity extra strength, as he had no prior corpus of knowledge on which to build his constructions of Britain.⁹³ In his sea journey over to Britain he instantly remarks that 'the ocean is full of wonders. If I described them all my book would become too bulky.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 46) Once he reaches the shores of Britain the urban landscape of London is described in awed terms when he questions: 'what can I say in praise of London? There is no city on earth as large or beautiful, and it is beyond my powers to describe it fittingly.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 56) On St Paul's Cathedral he states 'its splendid design and excellent construction must be seen to be appreciated.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 57) Much like the intrepid Orientalist explorer, the hardships of the journey are placated by the wonders he finds in England. This is evocatively displayed when he recalls: 'just as I had been depressed by the hardships of the voyage, I now felt elated by the beautiful sights of London town, amidst which my homely face was like a leafless plant in a flowering rose garden.' (I'tesamuddin, *The*

Wonders of Vilayet, 54) In these evocations, I'tesamuddin imitates the curiosity of the Orientalist traveller; he adopts similar terms of reference in his detailing of the city, its architecture and landscape, but also crucially his place as a tourist within it. Motifs of the travel genre are consistently employed and then reversed.

Definitions of modernity are wide and varied and the term itself can be used in a variety of contexts. My usage of the term in this chapter, and more generally throughout my study, applies modernity, as a definition for a particularly Western way of viewing and making the world. I employ Anthony Giddens's definition here, because it situates the advent of modernity directly before the time period in which I'tesamuddin wrote in the eighteenth century, and also coincides with his contemporary reading of its scope and dimensions:

‘Modernity’ refers to modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. This associates modernity with a time period and with an initial geographical location.⁹⁴

Moving forward with this definition of modernity, one particular dimension that I'tesamuddin can be viewed to recognise in Britain, is the extent to which industrialism facilitates its wider development and spread. Industrialism refers to the ‘social relations implied in the widespread use of material power and machinery in production processes. As such, it is one institutional axis of modernity.’⁹⁵

I'tesamuddin is awed at the efficiency of Western modernity (industrialism) in much the same way as Eastern antiquity would have been placed under the microscope. He praises the way monitored and coordinated street lamps brought light to the city, a factor which he connects with the order and safety of its citizens:

The streets of the city are lighted up. People of all classes walk about without the help of torches or lanterns ... even women of respectable families go out alone on foot to shop or visit friends and relatives till the fourth hour of darkness. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 62)

This idiom is expanded when he describes the way fresh running water is piped to all parts of London:

Underground pipes of lead and alloys carry the water to every street, and auxiliary pipes lead off from these into tanks in every house and building. As the water is released for distribution once a week, each householder stores enough to last the week. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 62)

The enabling possibilities of modern technology are eulogised and the potential benefits for people's lifestyles are also noted.

I'tesamuddin ends the passage by alluding to the potential of such modern technologies to transform lifestyles back in India, a process that British expansion in India had already begun to develop. On the cleanliness of the British sewage system, he notes that 'this way of keeping houses, streets, alleys and bazaars clean and tidy may be observed in the British settlements in India.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 63) In this assertion, I'tesamuddin can be viewed as exposing the globalising intent and potential of Western modernity: 'modernity is inherently globalising – this is evident in some of the most basic characteristics of modern institutions.' (Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 63) It can also be read as a surrogate emphasis for the connection between the spread of British modernity and colonialism in India. Thus, I'tesamuddin seeks to underwrite the authority of his text by exhibiting his ability to appreciate and read modernity and selectively choose elements of Western society that would prove beneficial to his own social order; a motivation that also lay at the heart of classic Orientalism, where the reinvigoration of Western society figured as a consistent motif.

I'tesamuddin profiles a series of English civil and political attributes that he figures as a template from which Indian society could be developed. He lauds especially the political system that was the cornerstone of the modern developments that were taking root in British society. On English polity, he explains that 'the excellence of the English political system is that even if the ministers make such mistakes as all human beings are prone to, the polity is not damaged beyond repair.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 107) The English legal system is also lauded for its egalitarian disposition:

A strict code of conduct is enjoined. Neither bribes nor gifts are permitted; if one party attempts bribery, even if its cause is just, the judges will assume otherwise. No partiality is shown to people of rank ... this law is designed to deter the rich and powerful from oppressing the poor and weak. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 112)

Even the strength of the British military is conveyed in positive terms:

The English give special importance to the construction of large and sturdy warships, and excel all other European nations in naval warfare; they have a natural genius for it ... their navy is so large and their army so well equipped that none of the other Firinghee nations can ever hope to conquer them. (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 109-110)

In these deliberations, I'tesamuddin demonstrates his ability to read modernising England as a technological and developing force that distinguished it from the social, political and economic structures in India, which were not as amenable to change.

He also understands that these forms of technological and political modernity could be enriching and protective of a vibrant and powerful nation state (and Empire). I'tesamuddin showcases a subjectivity which co-mingles the positive aspects of modernity with the tenets of his own cultural and religious world, which could variously be in conflict with British modernisms such as the military and machine technology. The travelogue portrays a balanced and nuanced travelling

subjectivity, which posits I'tesamuddin's account in relativist terms, and also historically resituates travellers like him as modern Indian subjects in their own right. His conception of Indian modernity comingles traditional values and customs with what he views as the benefits of 'modernising' England. Although not positioned as a British modern subject in the late eighteenth century, I'tesamuddin confounds the historical dynamic that has hitherto viewed the two elements (Oriental and modern) as mutually exclusive.

Another significant Orientalist trope that I'tesamuddin re-orient is the way in which the Orient was exoticised, especially native women who continually came under the exotic gaze of the intrepid Orientalist traveller. This dynamic is consciously reversed by I'tesamuddin who almost immediately eroticises the British female but also describes how he himself is placed into the erotic gaze of the British lady. He is conscious of his own exoticism and deploys it wilfully: 'the English had never seen an Indian dressed as I was. They considered me a great curiosity and flocked to have a look.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 53) In this social exchange, I'tesamuddin recognises that he is made into a spectacle by the native culture but instead of recoiling from his Otherness he actually embraces it: 'how ironic that I, who had gone there to enjoy a spectacle, became a spectacle myself.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 53) I'tesamuddin hints at the sexual charge that his exoticism aroused in the host population when he states 'the ladies of the Bazaar approached me and, smiling, said, "come, my dear, and kiss me!"' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 55) Throughout these passages, I'tesamuddin consciously reverses Orientalist motifs of exotica. Western society becomes the subject of Oriental fascination and wonder, but at all times he assumes control of his own exotic disposition, he consciously courts it; it is not imposed on

him from the outside, in the way it would have been done in the Orientalist exotic canon.

This is demonstrated in the way he eroticises the native British female almost immediately once he reaches the imperial centre. On entering England, he proclaims that ‘the sight of their lovely women dispelled the sorrow of solitude and cheered me greatly.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 53) He re-emphasises his admiration for Western female beauty, stating ‘in such attractive company ... even the wisest are apt to lose their wits. The ladies were lovely as houris; their beauty would have shamed even fairies into covering their faces.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 53) The tone and language I’tesamuddin adopts for his admiration of English women is couched within the Orientalist tradition where the woman’s beauty is attributed mystical and disempowering properties. Typical Orientalist imagery is reversed and the white female is lionised in much the same way the Egyptian belly dancer would have been or the Indian dancing girl: ‘these fairy-faced ravishers of the heart move with a thousand blandishments and coqueties; the earth is transformed into a paradise, and heaven itself hangs down its head in shame at seeing such beauty.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 60) Orientalist hyperbole is unconsciously replicated in an attempt to arouse the interest of the Indian reader, but more importantly it serves as an opening up of Britain itself as a terrain that could be consumed by the subaltern. Britain too is Orientalised and sexualised whilst being converted into an imaginative creation.

I’tesamuddin, in his wanderings in London, details a libidinous sexual terrain. These perceptions are wrought in much the same fashion as Orientalist travellers who travelled to the East and were confronted with different and at times

threatening sexualities. This threat against sexual propriety is demonstrated when he describes London as teeming with sexual possibilities where young lovers meet in public and prostitution is rife on the streets of the capital. Of prostitution he identifies ‘the peddlers of filth’ who ‘in the later hours ... are the only females abroad on foot.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 62) When venturing through what might have been Hyde Park in West London, I’tesamuddin comments that ‘men meet their fairy-like sweethearts and make love without fear of rivals or the police.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 60) I’tesamuddin also displays a provocative endorsement of such public sexuality when he laments the sexual restrictions back in India where the ‘Kotwal (Police Chief) ... [was a] cruel guardian of public morals.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 60) Embedded within this passage is a subversive attitude to sexuality that complicates the Orientalist paradigm which viewed the Orient as sexually unrestrained. Rana Kabbani has noted that in the late medieval Orientalist tradition, ‘the West ... [symbolised] social stability; the East pleasure, unrestricted by social dictates.’⁹⁶ In I’tesamuddin’s account, the Occident becomes the location of teeming sexuality and the Oriental traveller is the subject who is threatened by sexual impropriety.

This imposing sexuality is evocatively realised in his encounter with what he describes as a giantess who ‘as soon as she heard that a dark skinned Indian man had come to see her ... came laughing towards me.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 70) She was well over ‘five cubits in height. When I stood before her I only reached her armpit ... her face was so beautiful and her figure so desirable, that neither my pen nor my tongue is adequate to sing the praises of her fairness.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 70) The erotically charged exchange leaves I’tesamuddin to write: ‘we stared at each other for a while. Having never seen an

Indian man dressed as I was, she contemplated me with wonder; and I, seeing her resplendent features and magnificent form, was quite confounded.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 70) I’tesamuddin, in these exchanges and also in the invitation by his host culture to marry and settle in Britain, demonstrates that such ‘interracial marriages [and liaisons were] ... not a forbidden topic among them at this time.’⁹⁷ Throughout these passages, I’tesamuddin illustrates that the sexual dynamics which became a feature of Orientalism in the pre-colonial and colonial period, could be reversed and that the sexual gaze was dialogical, and not a completely monolithic imposition from one side to the other. In the following analysis, I will be looking at Mirza I’tesamuddin’s memoir as a challenge to Western theological certainties that sought to underwrite the imperial project as a civilising enterprise.

Debating the Theological Divide

Perhaps the most potent rhetorical attack I'tesamuddin makes upon Western Orientalist assumptions centres on the theological debate between his Eastern faith (Islam) and the faith of the Western civilisers (Christianity). The imperial project was as much derivative of a philosophical and theological firmament as it was imbued with a socio-economic desire to expand and conquer new territories in the pursuit of power and profit. The final section of the travelogue is preoccupied by a desire on I'tesamuddin's part to repel such missionary motivations that were predicated on the desire to convert and civilise what they viewed as backward and oppressive religions. Throughout the text, I'tesamuddin consistently repels attempts by his host culture to break the demands that were placed upon him by his Islamic faith. Michael H. Fisher has stated that in his travelogue I'tesamuddin expresses 'no sense of racial and cultural inferiority, as would some nineteenth-century visitors.' (Fisher, "From India to England and Back," 162) One such typical example is the way in which his dietary habits are rigorously controlled, where he refuses to eat food that would break his religious edicts, and thus refuses to eat meat that is not Halal: 'Christians do not distinguish between Haram [forbidden] and Halal [permitted] foods, but will eat whatever agrees with the palate.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 90) He actually criticises Western eating habits on his sea voyage to Britain: 'the Firinghees ... ate the bird with relish, having grilled them on a fire. Firinghees, particularly the French, are really very dirty eaters. The French Firinghees on the ship were unspeakable in their ways.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 45) In reversing the Western presumption of superiority, I'tesamuddin engages in a reversal of religious taxonomies that places his own faith above that of

his host culture. The final section of the memoir sees I'tesamuddin openly engage Captain Swinton, his patron, in a theological debate that also figured as a central concern for early Orientalists.

In his exchanges with Captain Swinton in regards to historical and religious doctrine, I'tesamuddin overtly and vocally challenges Western epistemological and ontological constructions. He openly engages in the debates that were current at the time, in regards to the nature of being, the development of civilisation, and the place of faith and religion within the development of society. I'tesamuddin's desire and ability to do so, represent historic evidence of an Indian subject, able to open up 'spaces for alternative conceptions of religions to emerge (and in some cases re-emerge) from the silence imposed by the dominance of Christian and secular approaches to the subject matter.' (King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 60) Richard King in his study, *Orientalism and Religion* (1999), has called for a 'commitment to cross-cultural and comparative analysis as well as a refusal to be limited by secular and Eurocentric categories.' (King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 60) In his refusal to be defined by Christian traditions I'tesamuddin demonstrates a framework that attempts a similar approach in the pre-colonial era. In his account, Christianity becomes the focus for investigation: 'I am no specialist in the history, beliefs and rituals of Christians, but I learnt something about the matters from English books and translations of the evangels, which I will summarise.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 88-89) He demonstrates to the reader his desire to analyse and command the religious doctrine of Western society, displacing it from the centre of universal theology as a reference point and placing it in relation to his own religious taxonomies of belief and rituals. 'Compared to Indians, the English give scant importance to religious observances like prayer, fasting or ritual chanting.'

(I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 93) In addition, he provocatively defines faith as a secondary pillar in Western society: 'having given material considerations priority over spiritual ones, the English have devised such rules and procedures for making all endeavours simple and orderly that people cannot but devote themselves to the pursuit of worldly success.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 123)

Captain Swinton admonishes the fatalism of Indian religions when he states: 'Moslems believe that everything depends on predestination and their own efforts count for nothing.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 99) However, I'tesamuddin confidently replies by outlining his theological position that 'Allah ... commanded man to use his faculties in both worldly and spiritual activities, but whether or not success will attend his efforts depends on what has been ordained before Creation.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 99) In his measured riposte, I'tesamuddin outlines a theological position which allows for a humanist sensibility, where the potential of mankind can be encouraged without infringement upon one's faith in God's design.⁹⁸ Thus, he decentres Western assumptions of rational superiority by stressing that his own faith is compatible with the dynamism of British modernisation (man-made social development), and that they are not fundamentally oppositional entities.

I'tesamuddin exhibits a complex relationship with the rubrics of British modernity. The dynamic nature of modern technological developments is praised, but not when it threatens to weaken Indian tradition, and the religious body of values that it helps to inculcate within society. Giddens in *The Consequences of Modernity* draws parallels between the way the modern (eighteenth century Britain) and the pre-modern (eighteenth century India) views the world, but distinguishes between the

models in which each uses to order their social worlds. The Orient is based on tradition:

The orientation to the past which is characteristic of tradition does not differ from the outlook of modernity only in being backward-looking rather than forward-looking ... Past time is incorporated into present practices, such that the horizon of the future curves back to intersect with what went before. (Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 105)

This traditionalism is linked to religion in India: ‘religious beliefs typically inject reliability into the experience of events and situations and form a framework in terms of which these can be explained and responded to.’ (Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 103) Conversely, the West is portrayed as dynamic and influenced by human action: ‘modernity is inherently future oriented, such that the “future” has the status of counterfactual modelling.’ (Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 177) I’tesamuddin complicates this dialectic by stressing that you can look both ways; the world can be re-shaped according to both the tenets laid down by tradition and future human endeavour. This duality in his thought explains the contradictory impulses he registers towards the benefits and vices of British modernity. Although he praises modern technological developments such as the ‘street lamps’ and ‘piped water’ in the city, he does not feel entirely comfortable with British modernisations which are expressed through the reformist agendas (missionary Christianity) of colonialism. These are viewed as a potential threat to the traditional customs of his native culture.

He expresses this fear by actually connecting Western religiosity to both the future orientation of British modernity and the burgeoning Orientalist project:

They say that God has sent man to this world to enrich and beautify it. In practical terms this means that if we try to build better homes, improve agriculture, invent new machines, add to knowledge, strengthen the realm’s defence, find new means of livelihood and find better food and shelter for the myriad creatures in our care, then we are truly fulfilling our divinely ordained role. (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 93-94)

An implicit suggestion within this passage is the idea that I'tesamuddin connects modernity, as represented by Western colonial development, with the civilising desire of Christian missionaries, and in this invocation reaches to the heart of the civilising impulses that were driving imperial expansion. This interweaving of imperial zeal and missionary practice has been highlighted by Antoinette Burton, who in her study on Victorian feminism in India states that: 'Orientalist scholarship and missionary discourses, together with the institutionalising of the English language and literature studies, virtually guaranteed the Victorian equation of ... [Indian] religious practices with moral, intellectual, and cultural deficiency.' (Burton, *Burdens of History*, 76)

Moreover, this nuanced and critical eye is turned against Western society and the desire for incessant development, progress and ultimately profit. He comments that the 'social pressure on the individual to be self reliant is not so high in any other country.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 123) This appraisal of modernity and social enterprise figure as consistent motifs in the narrative: 'my impression of the customs and mores of the Firinghees is that they are such as to conduce to the growth of many great homes and estates out of one.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 124) I'tesamuddin identifies how such motivations can mutate into rapacious greed where materialist values can become corrosive elements within society. On gambling, which he describes as very much a Western disease, he chides: 'many people in England are inveterate gamblers. They may lose all their property and effects at the table, and as a result come to be accounted uncommonly foolish. But what is strange is that they continue on the same course.' (I'tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 128) I'tesamuddin contrasts Islamic society with Western culture in this one respect; he argues that the latter ascribes self-worth to material

possessions, and that the former, as a genuinely faithful society, refuses to do the same. He asserts that ‘to the wealthy and the foreigners the religious poor may seem contemptible, but Muslim kings and nobles have always respected and honoured them. All this can be confirmed from chronicles and history books.’ (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 141) Again, I’tesamuddin appeals for a reappraisal of Western materialist culture, reversing Orientalist motivations whilst also offering in an alternative view of social prestige and the dangers of material modernity.

Towards the end of the memoir, I’tesamuddin warns the West against conflating Western beliefs with universal values, arguing that such an imposition would be incompatible and ultimately unsuccessful. In this regard, he rebukes the Orientalist project which was predicated on the idea that the East needed to be transformed into what the modern world demanded it should be, a replica of Western society:

Each nation has its own peculiar customs and practices, and so the food of one country will be pleasant to the taste of its natives, but to foreigners it maybe unpalatable. We should remember in particular that between your manners and customs and ours there is the difference of East and West. (I’tesamuddin, *The Wonders of Vilayet*, 140)

Although I’tesamuddin employs the Orientalist axis of East/West, he delineates the dialogism in counterpoint to conventional Orientalism. By stating that there are differences between the two, he calls for a sensitive and relative approach to cross-cultural exchange, and not the imposition of one set of religious values upon the other, a dynamic that the Orientalist project demanded. In openly engaging with his patron on a theological and philosophical level, he demonstrates his unwillingness to be defined by the Orientalist project; that he and his faith did not need to be

extricated from their own cultural and religious frameworks and placed within Western social and theological conventions.

The Wonders of Vilayet ends with I'tesamuddin's refusal to join Captain Swinton on his further travels. He does this because his religious sensitivities would not be guaranteed or protected. In broader terms, the travelogue can be viewed as a historical document of the wider refusal of an immigrant figure to be totally assimilated into Western cultural and social mores. It also demonstrates the ability of Indian writers to offer alternative and confident views of Western religions during this time period. Further analysis of such texts can probe the existence of what we now call post-colonial debates in a time frame that can expose the fallacy that such discussions are only now being openly debated. A more historic connection between such debates may help to bridge the divide between assimilationist and socio-plural cultural politics in multicultural Britain. New studies that attempt to open the history of reverse and counter readings of modernity and the development of modern Britain can give further credence to the idea that such debates are not post-colonial but a continuation of cultural, philosophical and theological politics that stretch back to the pre-colonial period. The following analysis will centre on Sake Dean Mahomed; a contemporary traveller to Britain whose journey to Britain begins in the Orient.

Dean Mahomed – The Travels of a Reverse Orientalist

The next author's travel account, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India*, was first published in 1794 and is actually set in India. An appropriate place to begin any analysis of Indian writers who travelled to the West is their place in the colonial structure that they had left behind, but also how and why it had propelled them towards the imperial centre. Sake Dean Mahomed actually wrote his travelogue in Cork in 1784 when he had eventually reached Ireland with his patron Captain Godfrey Evan Baker. Mahomed's friendship with the Protestant Anglo-Irishman, Evan Baker, was instrumental in his decision to migrate to Britain. Evan Baker was Mahomed's commanding officer in the East India Company's Bengal Army. After the death of his father, Mahomed came to view Evan Baker as both his best friend and a parental figure. As a result of the closeness of their relationship, and Evan Baker's exalted status within the British army, Mahomed was able to immigrate to the heart of the Empire upon Baker's retirement. Evan Baker's father, also called Godfrey Baker, was a wealthy merchant from Cork who had both the influence within the army, and the wealth to sponsor Mahomed's journey to Britain and Ireland. The Bakers were an established Protestant landholding family, one of the most significant in Southeast Ireland. The senior Baker was elected, at various times, to the office of Burgess, Mayor, Sheriff, and Water Bailiff in Cork. This relatively elite patronage was denied to most Indian travellers to Britain; it also directly facilitated Mahomed's other motivation to travel, which was the desire for economic and social betterment.⁹⁹

Throughout his life, Mahomed became skilled at adapting to his shifting surroundings; he recognised and embraced the possibilities of travel, and the

subsequent opportunities which the modernising world could present to him. The fact that he converted to Christianity, married an Irish wife, and indulged in British social mores such as drinking alcohol, demonstrated his ability to assimilate within British culture. It is my hypothesis that his account demonstrates a pre-colonial Britain that was constituted by 'Orientals' such as him to a far greater degree than has previously been acknowledged. Not only was he able to assimilate within British culture, he was also able to create his own version of Britain, a social formation that contributed to the development of British society as ethnically mixed. This section will try to demonstrate the variety of tools and means that Mahomed was able to use in order to construct his mobile identity and also his contribution to the colonial modernities of both India and Britain.

I will be locating Mahomed's project within what James Clifford has termed the dynamics of dwelling/travelling where 'the representational challenge is seen to be the portrayal and understanding of local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations and resistances, [where also] one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as on rooted, native ones.' (Clifford, *Routes*, 24) *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* cannot be confined within one particular form: it can be described in various terms as part memoir, autobiography and conventional travelogue. I will also investigate his life in London as an entrepreneur and businessman who utilised his exotic background for material gain and finally his time in Brighton, where he pioneered the use of 'shampooing' and wrote his second English text in defence of his 'Oriental' art. The following section will first place Dean Mahomed within the class, race and religious parameters of Indian society at the interstices between the rise and fall of two great empires, the Mughal Empire and the British Raj.

Dean Mahomed was born in Patna in the Province of Bihar in Eastern India in 1759, into a family who had a long tradition of service within the Mughal imperial court. However, during this period the various regional seats of power governed by Muslim leaders, such as the Nawab of Bengal, suffered political decline. As a consequence, Muslim families of the service elite, like Mahomed's, decided to affiliate themselves with the rapidly expanding (British) East India Company's armies and administration. As a consequence of this shift, Mahomed's father and older brother enrolled for service within the Bengal army of the East India Company. Mahomed was born into and subject to these competing allegiances, as the Indian political system engaged in a power struggle that rendered loyalties and affiliations highly complex and malleable. Michael H. Fisher states that the Bengal army as an entity was emblematic of these greater political machinations, because 'the complex entity known as the Bengal army arose directly out of the conflicts between the English company and the Nawabs of Bengal.'¹⁰⁰

Thus, Mahomed was born into a highly contested cultural world where identity was subject to hybridised political systems that required of him to be mobile and dexterous in his identity formations. It also demonstrates what Bhabha has called the 'ambivalence and antagonism of the desire of the other ... [from which] we can avoid the increasingly facile adoption of the notion of a homogenized other ... [that underpins] oppositional politics of the margins and minorities.'¹⁰¹ Fisher states:

Throughout the period of Dean Mahomed's *Travels*, the boundaries of the Bengal army remained ill defined. Sepoys and Indian officers moved relatively easily from one army to another, including into or out of the company's army and that of its opponents of the day. (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 125)

Shifting cultural designs were not just indicative of the militaries in India at the time but also the country as a whole. Social dexterity proved crucial to Mahomed's future ability to place himself in a variety of social positions in Ireland and Britain, because he already had to negotiate for himself an identity within the contested field of Indian social politics. This establishes in Mahomed's text, the axiomatic link between Orientalism as a discursive site on both sides of the global divide; he de-centres oppositional identity politics at the margins and the imperial centre.

Mahomed's travelogue can be seen as an attempt by a 'subaltern' subject to co-opt himself into the Orientalist project; both the form and content of the work were reminiscent of British representations of India (the Orientalist travelogue). The text takes the shape of the generic epistolary form, with Mahomed writing to a fictionalised friend or patron he addresses as Sir. Fisher states that 'the epistolary style enabled an author to write more intimately and confidently, to notionally address an (unnamed) friend, rather than a faceless world of unknown readers.' (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 222) As a consequence of this generic convention, the imaginative geography of the text locates Mahomed as writing back from India to the West. This dynamic establishes two key points, the first being his ability to use European forms and language, and the second being that by implication he must have been writing for a European audience. The *Travels* take the shape of a memoir as opposed to an autobiography, because Mahomed did not explicitly examine his 'inner self and, indeed, made his own life only a relatively minor theme ... he described the outer world of the events, customs and natural features he encountered. His apparent goals were to provide his readers with pleasure and edification.' (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 223) Dean Mahomed writes the Orient for the West in

much the same way many British Orientalists such as Reginald Heber and Francis Buchanan were doing at the time and in the future.

Reginald Heber was born in Cheshire, England, on April 21, 1783 to scholarly and middle class parents. In 1800 he enrolled at Oxford University where he won praise for his scholarship and literary ability. After completing his studies in 1804, he took a long tour of Europe before being ordained to the Anglican Church in 1807. Consequently, he was awarded a D.D. degree from the University of Oxford in 1823. In the same year, he was the first Anglican Bishop to be sent to India. Once in India, his missionary work included baptising converts (he baptized the first convert in East India), consecrating churches, and establishing schools. Heber strongly supported the civilising credentials of Christianity and British colonialism, and laboured tirelessly for its spread throughout India. He sermonised, particularly, against the caste system. His time in India lasted only three years due to the intense work schedule, and high humidity; he returned to Britain where he died suddenly at the age of 43, on April 3, 1826. Heber was a prolific writer who made frequent contributions to magazines of his poems, hymns and essays. However, he was most distinguished by his sermons, biographies, and Indian travel writing.

In his travelogue, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, Heber uses Orientalist romantic imagery to describe the spectacle he encounters on his approach to India, by ship. ‘Everybody on board was touched and awed by the glory of the scene, and many observed that such a spectacle alone was worth the whole voyage from England.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 15) Expressions of awe and wonder permeate his text once he lands on the shores of India. ‘This evening we had a most beautiful sunset - the most remarkable

recollected by any of the officers or passengers, and I think the most magnificent spectacle I ever saw.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 15) Heber employs heightened sensations in which to render intelligible the Oriental Indian scene. On seeing the Himalayan Mountains, he declares: ‘I felt intense delight and awe in looking on them [mountains].’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 249) The reader is also reminded of the foreignness and distinction of the scene which is being described: ‘I greatly regretted I had no means of drawing a scene so beautiful and interesting.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 25) Mahomed can be viewed to appropriate Heber’s sense of awe and curiosity in letter eight: ‘the riches and luxury of the East, are displayed with fascinating charms.’ (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 52)

As the narrative develops, Heber begins to betray the Christian civilising desire of his missionary role in India. He views superstitious Hindu religious practices as foolish and a symbol of retrogression: ‘The amiable manners and countenances of the people, contrasted with the symbols of their foolish and polluted idolatry.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 25) This attack upon religious and cultural decay results in the native inhabitant being described in regressive and savage terms: ‘There are among the Hindoos very frequent instances of murder, but of a more cowardly and pre-meditated kind. They are cases chiefly of women murdered from jealousy.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 33) Native Hindus are portrayed as uncivilised and brutal in their dealings with women; Indian patriarchy is over sexualised and needs reformation: ‘Mr Hawtayne officiates here; he can boast the honour of having converted a Hindoo of decent acquirements and respectable caste, who was baptised a few days ago.’ (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 37) Throughout Heber’s travelogue, the Indian scene is described as beautiful

and beguiling; however, its native peoples are variously described in a state of savagery and in need of civilising.

Mahomed blurs Heber's distinction between Western 'civility' and Eastern 'savagery' by commenting on his encounters with the various warring tribes of India. He places himself within the myopia of the 'civilising' gaze and against the savagery which he lucidly describes. When detailing one such encounter in letter nine, Mahomed employs textbook Orientalist imagery: 'a gang of those licentious savages rushed with violence on them, inhumanly butchered seven or eight of our people, and carried off three elephants, and as many camels, with several horses and bullocks.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 55) Mahomed also identifies himself with the superiority of Western modernity, and its incumbent technological superiority in the face of backward Oriental resistance. A battle is described where 'some of the savages fell on the plain, others were wounded; and the greater part of them, after feeble resistance with their bows, arrows, and swords, g[ave] way to our superior courage and discipline.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 55-56) Throughout these passages, Mahomed's use of the first person plural 'our' indicates that he was intimately aware of the market he was writing for, and his epistemologies are shaped accordingly. Symbolically, Mahomed is even compelled to give the exact coordinates of places in relation to Britain:

Calcutta is a very flourishing city, and the presidency of the English Company in Bengal. It is situate on the most Westerly branch of the less Ganges in 87 deg. east lon. and 22, 45 north lat.; 130 miles north east of Balisore, and 40 south of hugely. (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 57)

As a traveller, Mahomed also voyages imaginatively through English literature. His use of English literary allusions demonstrates the extent of his reading and awareness of literary tastes in Britain, attributes that emphasise his position as a

writer. Tabish Khair has argued that ‘Dean Mahomed might have had social prestige in mind as the language of the text shows he was a man of literary interests.’ (Khair, *Other Routes*, 203) The richness of his language is displayed in the passage that describes with wonder and awe his entrance into Dhaka: ‘there are many fine seats on each side of the river, with a continued variety of beautiful improvements, striking landscapes, and sublime scenes of rural imagery, which at once astonish and delight the enraptured view.’ (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 124) The language and tone used in this passage is strongly indicative of the romantic and picturesque movements prevalent in British travel literature and poetry at the time.

He also conveys his awareness of how the Orient was imaginatively depicted within British literature. His deployment of a passage from *Paradise Lost* (1667) when musing on the significance of the fig tree for Indian (Hindu/Muslim) rituals, demonstrates both his consciousness of the way the Orient had been created within the British mind, and his ability to appropriate and subvert those conventions:

The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit reknown’d;
But such as this day to Indians known
In Malabar, or Decan, spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bending twigs take root; and daughters grow
(Mahomed, Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 82)

He employs this allusion for two effects, the first to demonstrate his worthiness as a writer for a British market who needed to believe in the value and efficacy of his reports, and secondly as a reference point for his portrayal of the Orient; with his account positioned as a reworking of prior depictions that are now being rendered with more intimacy and clarity.

Mahomed also goes into intimate details of the cities he visits, offering both English and Indian pronunciations of the districts within Calcutta:

The principal streets are the Cholut, where an endless variety of all sorts of goods are sold; the china bazaar where every kind of china is exposed to sale; the Lalbazar, Thurumthulla [Dharamtala], Chouringee [Chowringee] ... where European gentlemen of every description, mostly reside. The greatest concourse of English, French, Dutch, Armenians, Abyssinians, and Jews, assemble here; besides merchants manufacturers, and tradesmen, from the most remote parts of India. (Mahomed, *First Indian Author*, 37)

In offering these insights however, he begins to demonstrate the subtle differences between his project and that of the traditional Western imperialist. He describes the city as full of verve and richness: it is portrayed as a great centre of economic activity, inherently diverse, a melting pot, and crucially a world where Europeans are classified and differentiated. This proto-multiculturalism exhibited in Calcutta undercuts Western conceptions of the modern diverse city as being a Western construct. This paradigm has been identified by Tony Ballantyne, who has called for a wider recognition for sub-imperial centres such as Calcutta to be viewed as being at the centre of influence and circulation for regions such as South East Asia, thus disturbing the linear delineation of power from centre to colony. He states that 'it is possible to envisage that certain locations, individuals or institutions in the supposed periphery might in fact be the centre of intricate networks themselves.'¹⁰²

In reference to this idiom, I would like to make the claim for Mahomed himself: he writes in English but is at the centre of his own creations, he decides what to circulate, what is deemed relevant to report and what judgements to offer, all of which is enveloped in a mobile subjectivity that static conceptions of coloniser and colonised cannot account for. Ballantyne analogously postulates that such an endeavour:

Moves beyond a literary focus on the static text to focus on imperial systems of circulation, recovering the transmission of ideas, information and identities across the Empire. Such an approach allows us to recontextualize prominent imperial concerns that would otherwise appear marginal. (Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race*, 16)

Mahomed can be viewed as one such writer whose travels within India and Britain exemplify the manner in which this transmission of ideas became subsumed within dominant structures of knowledge (Orientalism). It also signifies their need to be reappraised within their mobile and temporal locations. Where I would differ slightly from Ballantyne is the need to locate Mahomed, and travellers like him, within a local British perspective, where their effects on British culture and society can be extricated from a purely imperial framework: where they are defined purely as Indians, migrants, natives or subalterns.

Mahomed's motivation for choosing a European form was also shaped canonically, as earlier Indian travel writing (which Tabish Khair has demonstrated in his edited anthology *Other Routes*) had already begun to be airbrushed from history by Orientalist historians, scientists and cartographers.¹⁰³ Thus, Mahomed's employment of the epistolary form was both a conscious choice with reference to his targeted audience, but also, a pragmatic decision based on the literary tools available to him. Mary Louise Pratt has termed this dynamic of selective appropriation as auto-ethnography; she states that 'if ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, auto-ethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations.' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7) Pratt would dispute the autonomy of Mahomed's text as she argues that 'auto-ethnographic texts are not, then, what are thought of as "authentic" or autochthonous forms of self-representation. Rather auto-ethnography involves partial collaboration with and

appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror.’ (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7) However, I would argue that Mahomed’s text displays much of the criteria that Pratt sets out.

I will aim to demonstrate through detailed analysis of his travel text that he is always able to create fluid models for himself, where he is neither subsumed within a purely imitative paradigm nor manipulated absolutely by Orientalist discourse. He explicitly displays agency in writing his own story and that of his Indian counterparts. Furthermore, I am going to shift slightly away from Pratt and locate the contact zone in the imperial centre, as opposed to her conception of it as being resident in the colonies only. What effect does this have on her conception of auto-ethnography when the construction of what she terms a partial discourse is conceived within the metropole as opposed to the colony? Is Mahomed’s auto-ethnography a more complete form of counter-discourse? The following argument will attempt to explicate that Mahomed was very much conscious of his role as an ethnographer rewriting Western conceptions of the Orient, using tools both akin and alien to the conventional Orientalist.

Dean Mahomed as Ethnographer

Throughout the *Travels* Dean Mahomed encounters different cultures, landscapes, peoples and religions, but his text never ascribes a fixed identity to himself. This is especially important in locating the interrelated nature of identity formation within Mahomed's world; the self/other dialectic is always under pressure within the text as Mahomed asserts himself variously within Anglo-centric positions but then undermines these locations with his sense of affiliation to Indian customs and rituals. Michael H. Fisher similarly argues that the:

Diversity of Indian society meant that each city and region which he encountered struck him as distinct and worthy of notice. His relationship to other Indians remained ambivalent. He stood as both an insider to the domestic rituals of his Muslim relatives and also as an outsider to their world. (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 2)

Ambivalent narrative positioning allows him space to offer alternative ethnographic accounts of Indians without alienating or patronising his British readership. This is exhibited in the way he refers to his fellow Muslims as an outsider continually in the text. One such example among others is letter 14: 'the Mahometans meet death with uncommon resignation and fortitude considering it only as the means of enlarging them from a state of mortal captivity, and opening to them a free and glorious passage to the mansions of bliss.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 68) His readiness to tailor his writing to suit a British context is represented in the way he refers to Muslims as Mahometans, a term not acceptable to Muslims themselves, then or now.

However, he does not pander to British or Orientalist prejudices, nor does he seek to project and circulate them; he actually uses such tools to subtly undercut the moral and civil hierarchies where Orientals had been relegated to the lowest rungs of

the imperial ladder. This is demonstrated by the way he postulates the qualities of Muslim characteristics without offering direct comparisons with European habits and practices. He states ‘that the Mahometans are, in general, a very healthful people: refraining from the use of strong liquors, and accustomed to a temperate diet.’ (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 68) The comparison here is subtly invited and the suggestion that Europeans are not as controlled in their use of alcohol is implicit and illustrates his desire to recontextualise value systems outside Orientalist taxonomies. Tabish Khair writes that ‘often in the book, [Mahomed] appears to be implicitly or explicitly correcting dominant English views of India as an exotic land or a land of seductive depravity, of Muslims as blind followers of a depraved and oppressive religion.’ (Khair, *Other Routes*, 202) Mahomed strategically positions himself outside the Islamic community in India in order to espouse the civility of their virtues and mentality, consequently subverting colonialist assumptions of their cleanliness, irrationality, selfishness, and even the dietary benefits of their cuisine.

His framing of the Other in more refined terms than the British Orientalist in India is demonstrated vividly in his portrayal of the Hindu faith and its varying cultures, traits and rituals. Mahomed positions the native character of the Hindus in contrast to that of the West and its supposed civility. The passage regarding the serenity of Benares seems to denote the dangers of modernity and Western culture to the simple character and innocence of the native peoples:

While wasteful war spread her horrors over other parts of India, this blissful country often escaped her ravages, perhaps secured ... by the sacred character ascribed to the scene ... and the prevailing idea of the simplicity of the native Hindoo’s [sic] a people unaccustomed to the sanguinary measures of, what they term, civilised nations. (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 80)

Mahomed ends the passage by placing uncertainty on the Orientalists' pretensions of bringing progress and modernity to India; what he does illustrate in implicit terms is the innocence of Hindu customs. The imposition of colonial modernity was not wholeheartedly embraced from the inside by indigenous circles. His use of Orientalist techniques allow him to posit ideas that at once seem complicit but in fact display a concern about the cultural hegemony of Western modernity. He takes care to render intelligible for Europeans the idiosyncrasies of Hindu life; he implores 'however strange their doctrine may appear to Europeans, yet they are much to be commended for the exercise of the moral virtues they inculcate, namely, temperance, justice, and humanity.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 82) Mahomed bids the reader to glimpse 'amidst a variety of extravagant customs, strange ceremonies, and prejudices ... traces of sublime morality, deep philosophy, and refined policy.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 83) The language and sentiment are very reminiscent of early Orientalists of the romantic generation such as William Jones, and Mahomed co-opts himself into this discourse in order to attribute notions of the sublime and the exotic to the Indian people, again with himself as an ambivalently positioned narrator.

Mahomed inculcates much of the Orientalist agenda when characterising the Indian people; however, his portrayal encourages the Western reader to penetrate beneath the exotic and alien customs of India rife in the West, to glimpse a parallel humanity. To do this, he inserts India within a narrative of progress that predates Western modernity:

The native Indians ... are men of strong natural genius, and are, by no means, unacquainted with literature and science ... We may trace the origin of most of the sciences, in their ancient manuscripts. Even before the age of Pythagoras, the Greeks travelled to India for instruction: the trade carried on by them with the oldest commercial nations, in exchange for their cloth, is a

proof of their great progress in the arts of industry. (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 83)

Through material and intellectual trade with the West, Mahomed argues that India had enabled the development of Western sciences and industry. These historical contributions to Western science would become increasingly neglected in Victorian Britain due to the rise of Anglicist Orientalism. Mahomed goes into great detail about the different rituals adhered to in India, but is careful in the way he both catalogues and differentiates between the two dominant (Muslim/Hindu) communities. He deliberates on the marriage and funeral customs of both the Islamic and Hindu communities whilst also paying attention to the specific cultural adherences of both faiths such as circumcision for Muslims and the caste system for Hindus.¹⁰⁴

These details are important in the way in which the Other within the Western mind is challenged: because it is contextualised by an Indian himself, his balanced and positive accounts can be seen as a victory for Indian diversity, and for himself as an objective ethnographer; he enters into a discourse that does not rest on hegemonic designs for power. Mahomed is also able to reverse the Orientalists' descriptive role as he gives detailed descriptions of European positions within the army in relation to that of his own and other Indian recruits. Every company of 'European privates [was] occupied in six tents and one belton: an Ensign, Lieutenant, and Captain, each a tent: such Officers as had jenanas or wives, erected tomboos, a kind of Indian marquees, for them at their own expense,' while 'the Seapoys [who] lay behind their belttons, in the same position as the Europeans, and their Officers, according to rank, were accommodated in much the same manner.' (Mahomed, *The Travels*, 46) In positioning the European soldiers, he takes great care to establish the equality of the

Indian soldiers in relation to them, a surrogate emphasis for his own role as narrator, ethnographer and protagonist. The subsequent section will locate and emphasise Mahomed's position within Britain as a writer, pioneer and cultural translator.

Cultural Translation

Dean Mahomed was the first Indian author to be published in the English language in England or India. He was aware of this precedent, and the need to be viewed as a genuine writer, that he was contributing a new perspective to a field of literature. The need for his work to be legitimised is instantly indicated by his declaration in the title that the narrative was written by himself. Fisher states that:

The very existence of this book made a statement about his own capacity to produce literature legitimizing himself by his own work ... he was also asserting that he was eyewitness to the events in the narrative: his identity authenticated the book, as well as the narrative. (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 213)

This was a tactic also employed by contemporary and pioneering Black writers such as Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho. They too identified the need to be validated by their ability to write and in effect create responses to British assumptions of their inferiority. In all probability, Mahomed may have been directly influenced by Equiano's text as he visited Cork in 1791 and a meeting between the two cannot be ruled out.¹⁰⁵ Figures such as Equiano and Sancho were by no means constitutive of a monolithic literary agenda; they were individual writers with distinct voices, attributes that are both vitally important if one is to avoid Orientalist assumptions about their collectivity. They can also be viewed as analogous to both the convergences and divergences of the writers analysed in this chapter. The protagonists must be framed as distinct writers, who can be placed within a subversive umbrella that is worthy of further study.

Their self perception as writers is exceptionally important because their literary integrity and validity is intrinsically linked to their worthiness as citizens and

thus writing in these narratives is an expression of both resistance and freedom. This freedom is exercised with purpose, as they negotiate between what they can say and what they cannot, whilst retaining the strength of purpose and literary technique to criticise dominant Orientalist and racial stereotypes that would disavow their ability to unlock the chains of such dogma. They also generally share a desire to defend their homelands, to place them outside of the Orientalist's laboratory, without being negatively weighed down by their ties to their respective cultures and religion. Generically, the use of letters, travel writing and autobiography emphasises the point that these writers were driven by a desire to rewrite their place within the world, and Britain was their site of this expression. Thus their contribution as British writers, writing from within a British context, needs to be explored. Critics can view Equiano and Sancho as being compromised and enslaved by their white audience and their prejudices, and these accusations can be leveled to varying extents at Mahomed, Malabari and Taleb; however, such presumptions cloud the manner in which these constraints were imaginatively co-opted and then re-laid. This creativity is as intrinsic to any conception of reverse Orientalism as it was for Orientalists themselves in their constructions of Africa and the East as broadly dark, exotic, mysterious and primitive.

There are a variety of connections that both engender and overlap the slave narratives with the South Asian texts that are the focus of this chapter. As with Equiano's work, Mahomed combines: 'autobiography, participation in the military and observations of scenes and peoples in other lands' with contrasts between their 'utopian native land[s] and a more artificial and less moral Europe.'¹⁰⁶ However, Mahomed does not write out of a context dominated by slavery; his text is far less polemical, because his humanity and credentials as a writer were perhaps more

readily accepted by wider British society. Mahomed's ability to function and manoeuvre effectively within this British imperial body politic was especially noticeable; he was able to shift between identities that could be labelled both Anglo-centric and exotic. Throughout his life in Britain, Mahomed was able to use the 'exotic' and 'Oriental' labels that would have been attached to him to his own advantage.

Much recent theory has begun to emphasise the creative possibilities of translation; what has for so long been perceived as a medium where essences are lost or somehow diluted, many theorists are now beginning to emphasise the transformative and positive aspects of translation. Mahomed writes in English and thus it would seem odd to include him here as a translator; however, his use of many of the generic forms of the day in order to translate his world into a language that both British and Indians readers at the time could find intelligible was impressive. Fisher argues that Mahomed in his writings sought:

To construct an identity among his readers ... his self presentation of material from his past was highly selective. He omitted some events and included others according to an agenda that would, presumably, demonstrate to his largely Anglo-Irish audience an identity of his own choosing. (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 225)

Fisher, in his detailed history of Mahomed, also cites Jemina Kindersly and John Henry Grose as extensive sources from whom Mahomed borrowed and adapted significant portions of text. Kate Teltscher adds that what is most notable about the 'translations' 'is the positive gloss added by Dean Mahomed to passages of cultural condemnation: the use of the betel, for example, denounced by Grose as a vicious habit, features in Dean Mahomed's version as healthy and invigorating.'¹⁰⁷

I do concede Tejaswini Niranjana's argument that translation 'as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism.'¹⁰⁸ However, Mahomed's adaptations can be viewed as challenging the authority of colonial discourse in its definition of the Other, as his translation revises British originals that are presented as reality and re-presents them through Oriental eyes, thus offering up a different version of reality, a rewritten version of the Orientalist text. Susan Bassnett has argued that such translations indicate a highly malleable discursive site that 'requires an extraordinary set of literary skills, no whit inferior to the skills required to produce that text in the first instance.'¹⁰⁹ Mahomed's text as a whole, in regards to reversing the hegemony of Orientalist discourse, can be viewed as evidence of translation that 'serves as a way of continuing to write and to shape language creatively ... act[ing] as a regenerative force.' (Bassnett, *Translator As Writer*, 179)

His opening of the Hindostanee coffee house in 1810, situated in Portman Square London, was one of the first attempts at what is now effectively Britain's favourite eatery. The curry house was aimed 'to appeal and cater not to the numerous Indians then living in London but rather to the same type of men who had been his patrons in the past.' (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 257) The establishment was recently commemorated by a plaque that now stands on a building called Carlton House.¹¹⁰ Mahomed cleverly marketed his 'exotic' identity to returning company officials from India to create a place for himself that both located him within mainstream British society but also elevated him above his rival coffee shop owners. These restaurateurs were British who had returned from service in India. He was adept at playing with Orientalist assumptions and deployed them for his own ends. Thus, the coffee house can be seen as a micro-site of resistance to the idea that

Britain at the time was a place explicitly hostile to difference and the alien. Mahomed's endeavours indicate a society that was open to infiltration and reinvention and he played an intrinsic role in coalescing British and Indian culinary tastes, a legacy that continues to the modern day.

Due to the closure of his coffee house, the need to make a living and provide for his family was still paramount and this resulted in him and his family moving to Brighton, where Mahomed's ability to re-create himself was called upon once again. It was also the instigation for his second written publication, *Shampooing, or, Benefits Resulting from the Use of the Indian Medicated Vapour Bath*, published in 1822, and then republished with amendments in 1826 and 1838. 'Each edition expanded the previous one, adding another layer to his identity to reflect the self-image he wished to project at that time.' (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 282) His text made no reference to the thirty years he had spent in Ireland and London and his autobiography now included ten years of medical training in India:

The humble author of these sheets, is a native of India; and was born in the year 1749, at Patna, the capital of Bihar, in Hindoostan ... I was educated to the profession of, and served in the company's service, as a surgeon, which capacity I afterwards relinquished, and acted in a military character, exclusively for nearly fifteen years. (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 282-83)

Up to this point, apart from a short description in his travelogue, Mahomed had shown no obvious expertise in the arts of shampooing (medicated massage and steam bath). What he was able to do was to combine his exotic background with a media savvy to create an image of himself from which he could build a succession of successful baths in Brighton that became so famous that they earned the patronage of the monarchy. The 1838 edition was actually dedicated to King William IV.

To authenticate himself as a genuine medical practitioner, Mahomed employed what appeared to be a dichotomy of legitimations, the first was that his art was exotic and thus was only able to be practiced by him because of his own 'exotica' and secondly, he located his practice within a rising European medical discourse, what Foucault would later term the expanding biopower of the state.¹¹¹ The structure of his text was very representative of the era where an entrepreneurial spirit led to a litany of experts proclaiming the medicinal benefits of their products; it encompassed a 'quasi-scientific analysis of diseases, symptoms, methods, cures and testimonials.' (Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 282) Mahomed assumes the guise of inventor and medical innovator in a declaration of his own scientific advancement:

So it was with me: in the face of indisputable evidence, I had to struggle with doubts and objections raised and circulated against my bath, which, but for the repeated and numerous cures effected by it, would long since have shared the commonest fate of most innovations in science.¹¹² (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, vii)

Catherine L. Innes argues that Mahomed is:

One of the most striking instances of the ability of some Asian and Black writers to draw upon their cultural heritage and double identity as loyal subjects and 'outsiders' to offer themselves as pathologists, able to redeem the ills which will make Britain a whole and healthy body. (Innes, *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain*, 55)

Mahomed co-opts himself into European conceptions of modernity; however, he does this by interrelating pre-modern Indian methods within a discourse of progress that was supposed to consign such antiquities to the peripheries. Instead, Mahomed highlights that such a singular perspective does not allow for the interventions made by Indians at the centre of British society and its developing modernity, that such interventions are constitutive of British modernity as opposed to being merely influential in varying degrees.

He displays a particular ability to manipulate modern print media such as newspapers and advertising in ways that allowed him the space to legitimise himself within British society. This is illustrated in a series of advertisements he placed in a variety of medical and lifestyle publications:

The convenience of Mr Mahomed's establishment for baths of every description is unequalled and ... The warm bath so materially calculated for promoting the health of the human system, may be had here in all its luxuries; and Mr Mahomed has no hesitation in saying, in a superior mode to any other establishment in the kingdom. (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, 198)

Thus, he displayed an intimate knowledge of the way in which modern discourses could be co-opted but also created. Exotica is one such colonial discourse that is particularly appropriated by Mahomed; he draws upon the discourse of Orientalism in order to become a living embodiment of 'ancient medicine,' a figure uniquely able to translate the past for the benefits of patients in England. He cleverly connects European classicism with his own branch of antiquity when he states that 'bathing is coeval with the remotest periods of antiquity. Homer mentions the use of private [Shampooing] baths.' (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, 1) In doing this, Mahomed posits a correlation between European and Oriental learning that he himself is reviving. This again problematises the assertion that colonial modernities were fashioned wholly in opposition; Mahomed actually points to the mutuality of antiquity that undermines any conception of an autonomous development of either European or Indian culture.

Mahomed also displays agency in the manner he appropriates his 'exoticness' and deploys it selectively, he in effect becomes the romantic Orientalist who propounds the glory and efficacy of exotic practices that once linked Europe with the Orient. He proclaims that 'shampooing is a process, I feel it incumbent on me to acknowledge, cannot be practised by any person unaccustomed to it, or who has not

frequently witnessed and been instructed carefully in the operation' (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, 1), and that 'the herbs and essential oils with which my baths are impregnated are brought expressly from India, and undergo a certain process known only to *myself*, before they are fit to use.' (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, 3) Thus, Mahomed becomes the Orientalist who brings Oriental treasure back to the metropole for the benefits of his patients. He even goes on to challenge attempts from British imitators in London who sought to copy his practices and thus threaten his position as the translator of Oriental exotic wisdom. His advertisement proclaims that 'Sake Dean Mahomed has long been solicited to come to town ... he felt no desire to do so until he found that an establishment was carried on in his name, with which he has not ... the slightest connection.' (Mahomed, *Shampooing*, 200) Mahomed actually delineates a process where the coloniser assimilates the traveller's self-creations, a reverse mirror image of what Bhabba has termed mimicry, where the 'process by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed.'¹¹³ In Mahomed's dynamic, the subaltern becomes the imitated and the colonialist becomes the imitator.

Dean Mahomed's life in Britain and his writings highlight the manner in which British and Indian colonial modernity could overlap. For example, the manner in which he used the print media to advertise his shampooing baths demonstrated his ability to fuse Eastern and Western technologies. However, what has hitherto been neglected is the manner in which Mahomed was able to appropriate the language and imagery of Orientalism to project himself within British society, as a subject not merely as a traveller. Mahomed's deliberate exoticising of himself can be directly compared with the pseudo-orientalising architecture of the Brighton Pavilion that was being constructed during the early nineteenth century:

The Pavilion's major theme became eclectic Oriental exotica. A gift to George [IV] of Chinese-style wallpaper (c. 1802) led to extensive decoration and redecoration of the Pavilion in what George and his architects believed was "Eastern luxury." While chinoiserie had been fashionable long before, a new amalgamation of putatively "Indian" themes made the Pavilion a striking expression of England's rapidly expanding eastern Empire, with India as its crown jewel.¹¹⁴

His time in Brighton contributed to a legacy that still posits the place in cosmopolitan terms, a genuine contribution to the multicultural state that exists within Britain today. The following chapter charts the actual journey to the centre of the empire by Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, who built on the project that Mahomed had begun, that of writing the West in the West, as constitutive of British society but also as an imaginative map to be transported back to the Orient. I will delineate a process where Abu Taleb reverses Orientalist tropes such as the aristocratic grand tour, exotica, romanticism and the picturesque to construct a framework upon which he attempts to Orientalise Britain itself.

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan – The Persian Prince

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan was born into the same social background as Dean Mahomed; he was born in Lucknow in 1752 and his family were part of the same Persian ruling class in Eastern India. Although his father fell from favour, Abu Taleb continued to receive the patronage of the Nabob Shuja al Duala because of their maternal family connections. He too, like Mahomed, selected the travelogue as his chosen form in which to write the West. His travels began in February 1799 and he ended his journey in August 1803. The first edition of the travelogue was published in 1810 under the title *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803* and was translated by Charles Stewart who labelled the translation of the text in his preface as the ‘first time the genuine opinions of an Asiatic, respecting the institutions of Europe, have appeared in the English language.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, xxxiv)

Abu Taleb differs from Mahomed in a variety of ways: firstly he wrote exclusively in Persian and not English, he wrote far more extensively (he was also a poet), explicitly identified himself as a Muslim and actually made the return voyage home back to India. His travelogue, unlike Mahomed’s, focuses on his journey to Europe and back, whereas, Mahomed’s never actually leaves the shores of India. His chosen readership is also slightly different, as he also wrote with an Indian audience in mind; he ‘wished to “afford a gratifying banquet to his countrymen” by describing the “curiosities and wonders which he saw” and by giving “some account of the manners and customs of the various nations he had visited.”’ (Khair, *Other Routes*, 327) In this observation, Taleb’s travelogue can be imaginatively related to the survey form of the British Orientalist travelogue, which was ostensibly constructed

to provide the colonial British administration and public, with a detailed picture of the Indian landscape and population.

Dr. Francis Buchanan was a Scottish physician and botanist; he was born in 1762 at Bardowie, Perthshire and studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh. After spending several years in the Merchant Navy, Buchanan worked for the Bengal Medical Service between 1794 and 1815. From 1803 to 1804 he also served as surgeon to the Governor General of India in Calcutta, Lord Wellesley. In 1799, after the defeat of Tippoo Sultan and the fall of Mysore to the British, Buchanan was asked to survey South India for colonial expansion; this resulted in *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (1807). Between 1807 and 1814, under the instructions of the British government of Bengal, Buchanan made a comprehensive survey of the areas within the jurisdiction of the East India Company: he reported on agriculture, history, religion, topography and the condition of the inhabitants. Buchanan returned to Britain in 1815, where he inherited his mother's estate and died in 1829.

Buchanan begins his survey of South India by offering a description of the Madras harvest: 'these fields are now covered with rice, approaching to maturity; and in the rainy season they yield another crop.' (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 1, 1) He also contextualises the different areas of India by comparing Madras favourably to Bengal: '[Madras] is almost as level as *Bengal*: ... The roads are good; and many of the huts being built of mud, and neatly covered with tiles, have a better appearance than those in *Bengal*.' (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 1, 2) The native population in Mysore is also classified:

My descriptions of sects are only to be considered as strictly applicable to those of the places where they have been taken. I avoid the Mussulman[s]; ... as I find that these people had, in general, very imperfect relations concerning their *Hindu* subjects, and frequently used distinctions to which there was nothing analogous among the aboriginal natives. (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 1, 79)

Buchanan enters into a discursive construction that strives to correct oriental representations of their own state and internal relations. This narrative posturing was indicative of British travelogues at the time, because they actively sought to academically construct the Indian landscape for their native British readers.

Taleb positions himself at the very beginning of his travelogue as a writer and philosopher. He also locates himself within the Orientalists' paradigm of academic scholar, a scientist who is placing an unknown territory into the realm of objective knowledge. This also figures as the primary aim behind his conviction to travel to the West. First, in classic Orientalist tradition he postulates the 'hardships' he has undertaken for the benefit of a greater good. Taleb appeals directly to his prospective readership:

For the benefit of my countrymen who may be inclined to travel, I shall here relate a few of the hardships and mortifications which I endured on board this ship, in hopes that they will take warning by my sufferings, and derive some advantage from my experience. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 18)

This comment echoes the aforementioned Reginald Heber's cautionary declaration, regarding the danger of British missionary travel to India:

The cholera morbus is making great ravages among the natives. Few Europeans have yet died of it, but to all it is sufficiently near to remind us of our utter dependence on God's mercy, and how near we are in the midst of life to death! Surely there is no country in the world where this recollection ought to be more perpetually present with us than in India. (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 60)

Mushirul Hasan, in his introduction to the most recent edition of the travelogue, also emphasises Taleb's self-conscious designs as a traveller and ethnographer whose

intention was to ‘give some account of the manners and customs of the various nations [he] visited, all of which was little known to Asiatics.’ (Hasan, Abu Taleb; *Westward Bound*, xii)

These ethnographic designs are delineated in his first encounter outside of India, when his ship docks on the Nicobar Islands. He at once gives coordinates of the island, but does not relate these coordinates to Britain, as Mahomed does, instead relating them to the equator. ‘These islands being situated near the equinoctial line, have two springs and two autumns; and as the sun had lately passed to the north of the line, we had incessant showers of rain.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 12) This passage is instantly followed by a physiological and sartorial description of the ‘native’ inhabitants who are described as ‘well made and very muscular. They are of a lively disposition, and resemble the Peguers and Chinese in features but are of a wheat colour with scarcely any beard. Their clothing consists merely of a narrow bandage round their waist.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 12) Taleb subverts the Orientalist gaze as the natives are not compared to Western norms or idioms; they are described within the form of Western travel writing but out of the epistemological conditions by which Orientalist ethnographies were engendered. He does not frame them inside his own or Western conceptions of morality, progress or civility and neither does he ascribe to them a position on the ladder of colonial modernity, as the classic Orientalist in Saidian terms would inevitably have done. Instead, the natives and their environment are displayed in wholly positive terms where Taleb actually expresses a desire to assimilate within their culture: ‘I was so much captivated by the mildness of the climate, the beauty of the plains and rivulets with the kind of life and freedom which the men enjoyed, that I nearly resolved to take up my abode among them.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 13)

Conventional Orientalist dialogisms are deliberately distorted by Taleb. One such distinction between East and West, registered consistently in Orientalist textbooks, is the savagery of the colonised native in counterpoint to the benevolence of the colonial subject who reports it:

The *Moplays* of *Malabar* ... are remarkably quiet, industrious people ... [However, they have] been encouraged by *Tippoo* in a most licentious attack on the lives, persons, and property of the *Hindus* ... they are [actually] fierce, bloodthirsty, bigoted ruffians. (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 2, 422)

Taleb challenges the moral certainties of this discursive convention. Lascar officers, who had deserted the ship due to the ill-treatment of the captain, are returned to the vessel with the aid of the island's inhabitants in exchange for cloth. When the Lascars return he comments:

The ungrateful wretch of a captain, however, repaid their exertions and kindness by the grossest treachery; for, pretending that he could not open the hold ... and, before the islanders were aware of his intention the vessel had proceeded many miles to the southward. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 13)

Within this paradigm the treacherous and duplicitous 'native' is replaced by the European who is exposed as greedy and deceitful. Although implicit, the passage is also a powerful comment on the inequalities and exploitation of the imperial project as a whole. As a traveller, Taleb also posits his journey into Europe as one that is governed by a descent into danger and conflict:

We were then in the track between Europe and America, and most of the Kings of Europe were at war with each other, these latitudes ... [were] considered to be more replete with danger than any other part of the ocean. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 33)

His described journey is one fraught with difficulty, fear and a sense of danger presented by modernity and its incumbent armour and military technology.

Once he lands in Britain and Ireland, Taleb explicitly reverses the Orientalist gaze; he offers descriptions of the smallest details and his descriptions are imbued with a genuine sense of wonder. Amitav Ghosh in his foreword to *Other Routes* (2005) argues that the ‘true corollary of a genuine sense of wonder is not fancifulness but, on the contrary, a certain meticulousness.’¹¹⁵ This emphasis on personal detail and reluctance to generalise is expressed when he states that ‘the tempers and manners of ... [Britain’s] inhabitants ... [are so varied] that no two of them appear to think or act alike.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 88) Taleb does not prescribe and compare details of his travels to a body of universal values in the way an Orientalist in Saidian terms would. Ghosh correlatively argues that ‘this is why so many apparently trivial details find their way into these [Oriental] narratives,’ because these Oriental ‘travellers feel obliged to record what they see and what they hear. They do not assume a universal ordering of reality; nor do they arrange their narratives to correspond to teleologies of racial and civilisational progress.’ (Ghosh, Khair, *Other Routes*, ix)

The narrator (Taleb), consciously or unconsciously, allows for the element of surprise, and acknowledges the limitations of his perceptions as a witness. There are passages in the text where Taleb seems to either explicitly misunderstand, or deliberately misinterpret events that unfold around him. When describing people’s reactions to him in Ireland, Taleb conflictingly states that ‘they were all very curious to see me, but had no intention of offending me,’ but then goes on to describe a scene where ‘the people ... thronged so about [the shopkeeper’s] windows, that several of the panes were broken; and the crowd being very great, it was in vain to ask who had done it.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 55) We are allowed a glimpse here by the writer into the fissure between how he views events and the reactions

towards him. When describing his reception on the streets, which he relates as positive, the reader is allowed the space to decipher from between the lines the more realistic possibility that such a reaction was hostile, a reality which results in the window being smashed, both literally and metaphorically. Although, Abu Taleb plays with Orientalist conventions, he does not appropriate the position as an omniscient narrator relaying objective testimony; the reader is allowed into the interstices between his perceptions and the actions that unfold around him, events which may not coalesce with his subjective report.

When explaining caricatures to his readers, Taleb can be regarded as offering a tacit criticism of the way Orientalists politically framed the Orient in the West. An example of this political subjectivity is the moral pretensions of British Orientalists, who consistently stressed the civilising imperatives of colonial intervention at the expense of native practices:

The lower classes of people in India are like children; and, except in the more considerable places, where they meet with uncommon encouragement to industry from Europeans, are generally in such a state of apathy, that without the orders of government, they will hardly do anything. (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 1, 270)

Buchanan emphasises the idleness of the Indian native but also endorses their ability to reform according to British ideals and conventions:

After entering the lines within which the natives have long enjoyed the protection of an English government, a wonderful change for the better appears in the face of the country; and ... [this demonstrates] how capable of improvement all the land in that province really is. (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, Vol 2, 516)

His position as an Orientalist is exemplified by the terms in which he frames India; it is a landscape that requires reformation, and the British, are the ones who are explicitly placed to administer this need.

Taleb can be viewed to metaphorically complicate the civilising credentials evidenced by Buchanan; his emphasis is placed on the discursive constructions of the Other, and how these can be manipulated and distorted:

Painters of these countries sometimes draw ridiculous figures, called *caricatures* ... they in general are intended to exhibit the defects or follies of ... men, and sometimes to turn into ridicule the prevailing, passion or vice of the people at large. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 54)

Abu Taleb also displays an almost postmodern awareness of the fallibility of his recollections when he reasons:

On my return towards India everything was reversed, the last place being always inferior to that I had quitted. Thus, after a long residence in London, Paris appeared to me much inferior ... But when I arrived in Italy, I was made sensible of the beauty of Paris. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 25)

By taking a distance from his own immediate responses, Taleb detaches himself from the discursive orthodoxy such an initial reaction would be dictated by. This places him in contrast to Buchanan's discursively constructed responses.

Taleb employs another classic Orientalist trope in the way he compares the different inhabitants of the British Isles, in much the same form Orientalists like Reginald Heber used to compare the various natives of India. 'A Hindoo hardly ever strikes an equal, however severely he may be provoked. The Arabs, as well as the Portuguese, are less patient.' (Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, Vol 1, 33) When categorising the Irish, Taleb compares them to Britons but does not frame them in reference to himself or other Orientals. 'They are not so intolerant as the English, neither have they the austerity or bigotry of the Scotch. In bravery and determination, hospitality and prodigality, freedom of speech and open-heartedness, they surpass the English and the Scotch.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 52) Thus, he continues to deconstruct British hegemonic conceptions of moral and civil

superiority. He openly questions their framing of the Irish character when he contests: 'I had heard from Englishmen that the Irish, after they were drunk at the table, quarrel and kill each other in duels, but I must declare, that I never saw them guilty of any rudeness, or of the smallest impropriety.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 54) As a reverse ethnographer, casting his gaze on the imperial centre, Taleb chooses to expose the contradictions and inconsistencies within hegemonic British assumptions of the Other, and in doing so undercuts Orientalist constructions of the Other in a broader sense, ones that cast the Orient in those same terms: passionate, unrestrained and essentially violent. The following reading details to a greater degree Taleb's effort to write a counter narrative to the hegemony of Orientalist discourse.

Abu Taleb – The Orient Writes Back

Any consideration of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan as a reverse Orientalist and writer of the West must take into consideration the tradition from which he was writing. In this section, I will be placing Taleb within an Oriental (Islamic/Persian) tradition of writing about Europe which was prevalent in India during the period in which he wrote. The Indo-Persian language during this time was the pre-dominant language of culture and officialdom in India; however, this influence was beginning to be eroded by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the concurrent advance of British colonialism. ‘In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Persian texts were still being written in India and Abu Taleb’s book is by no means the only travel text in Persian from this period.’¹¹⁶

Said has been criticised for framing his criticism of Orientalism against the whole of the West, within a contextual framework that is mainly encompassed by the Middle East and the wider pan-Islamic world. What Said fails to acknowledge is the responses to hegemonic Orientalism that colonialism produced; that Islamic writers such as Taleb were just as interested as British Orientalists in making the Other visible. Mushirul Hasan in his recent edition of the text, *Westward Bound* (2005), has also located Taleb’s work within this Indo-Persian literary tradition. Hasan has argued for Taleb’s work to be analysed in respect of his pioneering status, but also as a direct challenge to the assumptions of Orientalist dogma which placed the realm of art purely within the Western episteme. He argues that Taleb’s canon and the tradition within which he was writing ‘meant that [the Orient] had a refined culture and literature of her own, her people had a fine taste for poetry, plays and operas, and a keen zest for philosophical speculation.’ (Hasan, Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*,

xii) I will locate Taleb within a tradition that discursively constructed the West, to open up the question of how the Islamic world was just as interested in Europe and its culture, modernity, social policy and technologies. Within Taleb's text, he makes continuous references to different technologies of the West, which he portrays in a positive light. Thus, he postulates an Islamic sensibility that was not hostile to modernity in the way Orientalists had begun to position them; instead, he highlights a sensibility that was both highly curious and pragmatic in its valuations of modern technologies such as the printing press, modern machinery, transport and industry in general.

Abu Taleb's appreciation of several modern technologies is expressed in glowing terms. His greatest admiration is reserved for the print media which 'of [all] the inventions of Europe, the utility of which may not appear at first sight to an Asiatic, the art of printing is the most admirable.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 95) Eulogies are also offered for 'the wisdom and skill manifested by the English, in the construction and navigation of their vessels,' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 97) whilst also 'the hydraulic machine for supplying London with water is [labelled] a stupendous work.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 104) He also expresses admiration for the increasing efficiency of the labour system that was the harbinger of the industrial revolution which enveloped Britain:

In England, labour is much facilitated by the aid of mechanism; and by its assistance the price of commodities is much reduced: for if, in their great manufactories, they made use of horses, bullocks or men, as in other countries, the prices of their goods would be enormous. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 102)

From these statements one can view a pre-colonial sensibility that does not concur with Orientalist assumptions of backwardness, antiquity and an aversion to progress.

Taleb highlights an Indian and Islamic sensibility that was commensurable with scientific progress and modernity in a broader sense than that which has historically been allowed for. Tabish Khair has argued that what is particularly noteworthy about Taleb's account of the colonial exchange is the way in which binarisms such as modernity/tradition and science/religion are not dichotomised along an axis of East/West. He offers appreciation for aspects of modern colonial society but without what he views as compromising what is sacrosanct within his own culture. Khair argues that this dynamic residue within Taleb's writing renders his account as 'post-colonial far before any kind of political post-colonialism came into being in India.' (Khair, *Other Routes*, 330)

My positioning of Abu Taleb as a writer who reversed the Orientalists' hegemonic gaze within the metropole, can perhaps, find no greater example than in his 'Vindication of the Liberties of the Asiatic Women' published in 1801 in the *Asiatic Annual Register* by Dundas Campbell. Mushirul Hasan attaches it in full as an appendix to his edition, *Westward Bound*. As well as excerpts within the main text, the article again highlights the various forms in which Taleb was able to appropriate Orientalist epistemologies and circumvent them for his own ends. Michael H. Fisher argues that Taleb's '*Vindication*' demonstrates:

[The] persistence of the theme of the alleged relative statuses of Asian and European women as indicative of the moral standing of their respective cultures. His exceptional account also reveals his efforts towards reversal of the prevailing European valorisation of these respective statuses.¹¹⁷

Taleb contests six prevailing stereotypes that relegated Asian women to the peripheries of Asiatic societies. He challenges European conceptions of Indian social rules, offering contrasting definitions of arranged marriage, inequality in judicial testimony, male initiated divorce, polygamy, purdah and widow's rights. Taleb

presents contrasting depictions of these practices which contributed to a large degree to the general definitions of Asiatic society as backward, licentious, unequal and unrestrained.

He argues for a more balanced appraisal of Muslim women's rights when he concedes that 'Mohammedan women ... are prohibited from mixing in society, and are kept concealed behind curtains, but are [also] allowed to go to the baths (in Turkey) ... and to sleep abroad for several nights together.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 112) In his vindication, Taleb states that European notions of Asiatic women being consigned to a pseudo sexual confinement from all men 'debarred from all amusement and society, proceed[s] entirely from misinformation.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 299) Taleb further contests that 'they can keep company with their husband's and father's male relations, and with old neighbours and domestics, and at meals there are always many men and women of this description.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 299) In further refusal of European stereotypes, he lists how Asiatic women exerted power over their domestic sphere, had parental rights over their children, held property rights in widowhood and finally through subtle gestures controlled the desires of their partners, all factors that European women did not credit them with and could not count on for themselves. In this respect, Taleb can be seen as a precursor of Said in his critique of the lazy absolutism that engendered much of Orientalist discourse.

Fisher frames Taleb's position as a figure who was 'writing as an authority on his own culture, he accepted the existence of these practices but he revalued them from negative to positive,' arguing for a relative perspective which acknowledged 'overall, [that] within proper purdah, women had the 'liberty' of their own cultural

world.’ (Michael H. Fisher, ‘Representing His Women,’ 227) Abu Taleb calls for a theoretical shift in the way cultures are viewed and compared, a paradigm that contrasts sharply with the Orientalists’ episteme, which conflates Western principles with universal values. Taleb frames twelve defects of the British character but paraphrases from the lexicon of Orientalist dogma; the British character is presented as lazy, unchaste, temperamental and selfish.¹¹⁸ British nature is explicitly Orientalised, as opposed to Occidentalised, as many of the foibles he identifies are excavated from within Orientalist taxonomies. He questions the civilising credentials of the impending colonial project by highlighting the inequalities of the class system in England. Taleb surmises that British social equality ‘is more in appearance than in reality; for the difference between the comforts of the rich and the poor is, in England, much greater than in India.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 113) In conclusion, Abu Taleb needs to be viewed within his own cultural and social traditions, be they Islamic or within a wider Indian framework. His project is one that varyingly acknowledges the benefits and drawbacks of Western modernity, whilst consistently refusing to condemn his own culture; he incorporates Islamic and Indian traditions within a grand narrative of a global modernity. The following analysis will explore Taleb’s employment of Orientalist tropes of the grand tour and reversal of the Orientalist’s erotic and exotic eye as further examples of his ability to rearrange the nexus of colonial power and knowledge.

Re-Rerouting the Exotic/Erotic

One particular dynamic that places Abu Taleb into the position of power in relation to that of his European counterparts, was his unique access to European women, a cultural contact that could not be replicated in reverse by the British Orientalist. Fisher argues that Taleb's ability to genuinely compare European and Asiatic women through participation 'emboldened him to elevate himself above his hosts, and his culture above theirs.' (Michael H. Fisher, 'Representing His Women,' 223) Taleb has access to both cultures and thus, his account can be read as genuinely cross-cultural. His increasing knowledge of English, initiated on his journey to Britain, also greatly enhanced his interaction with British society: 'after I had resided for a whole year in England ... [I] could speak the language a hundred times better than on my first arrival.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 53)

Abu Taleb consciously allows and even courts his own sexualisation; he reverses the Orientalist's eye for the exotic and turns it onto the metropole. This can be evidenced when he intentionally accepts the moniker of Oriental royalty that is placed upon him; he notes that the 'greater part agreed that I was a Persian *Prince*,' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 55) and incorporates this within the identity that he wilfully projects. Taleb later adds that: 'I may here perhaps be accused of personal vanity, that my society was courted, and that my wit and repartee, with some impromptu applications of oriental poetry, were the subject of conversation in the politest circles.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 63-64) This represents a splitting of Orientalism's hegemonic control of identity; it is the Oriental who retains definition of his own self, by shaping the epistemological framework of Orientalism and then projecting it back upon the imperial centre.

Abu Taleb makes continual references to the attention he receives from his various patrons and fellow diners at the banquets that he is invited too. He describes how ‘these ladies during dinner, honoured me with the most marked attention; and as I had never before experienced so much courtesy from beauties, I was lost in admiration.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 39) Taleb does not allow himself to be categorised or stigmatised within this erotic exchange; he undercuts Orientalist assumptions of the sexual boorishness and promiscuity of the subcontinental native. Kenneth Ballhatchet’s study on sexuality within the British Raj acknowledges the threat posed by travellers such as Abu Taleb to the power structure of colonial relations within the metropole:

Indian princes were suspected of designs upon white women, and this was seen as a reason for restricting their travels to Europe. Then white women were thought to be attracted to Indian princes ... in both cases the underlying threat was to the structure of power.¹¹⁹

By making the journey to the imperial centre, Taleb’s motives cannot be defined so easily, his presence at the centre of imperialism does disturb the existing power structure but at various times he is able to escape the definitions of promiscuity placed upon him. In South Africa where he is accosted by a group of Dutch women who snatch away his handkerchief, he refers to the Turkish custom where this sexual repartee would be a precursor to sexual intercourse. Contrary to stereotypes, he is able to subvert assumptions of his own intrinsic promiscuousness as an Oriental by refusing the offer:

The young women ... in dancing ... made use of so many wanton airs that I was often put to the blush ... a party of these girls once attacked me; one of them, who was the most handsomest and most forward, snatched away my handkerchief. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 26)

However, Taleb resists the tease by retorting that I ‘would only part with it to the handsomest ... the laugh was turned against my fair antagonist, who blushed, and

retreated to some distance.’ (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 26) This is not to say that as protagonist he does not revel in the sexual opportunities presented to him, but that he displays agency in the way his sexuality is portrayed; he does not allow himself to be categorised within dominant Orientalist stereotypes that would define him as lascivious and unrestrained.

Ronald Hyam in his study, *Empire and Sexuality* (1990), proclaims that ‘empire provided ample opportunities for sexual indulgence throughout the nineteenth century, though it was more obvious in frontier situations and the fighting services than in the settler communities.’¹²⁰ The travelogue of Abu Taleb represents a contrasting strain to previous historical accounts of colonial sexuality such as Hyam’s *Empire and Sexuality*, and Kenneth Ballhatchet’s *Race, Sex, and Class Under the Raj* (1980).¹²¹ Abu Taleb re-routes the borderlines of the frontier, and locates them within the imperial metropole. London is described in his ‘Ode To London’ as a haven of sexual opportunity:

Henceforward we will devote our lives to London
 And its heart-alluring damsels ...
 Adorable creatures! Whose flowing tresses,
 Whether of flaxen or of jetty blue
 Or auburn gay, delight my soul,
 and ravish all my senses. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 70)

The language he employs is laden with both Orientalist and Romantic imagery; he talks of ‘heart alluring damsels’ who ‘ravish’ all his senses, and it is not long before London itself becomes the object of Taleb’s affection:

No more in gardens, rivers, fields,

The wearied eye can find delight;
 Henceforth each joy that London yields
 Be ours – where beauty charms the sight ...
 Ye sure were form'd my soul to bless:

I gaze - and die as I behold. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 290)

Taleb's use of the phrase, 'die as I behold,' is especially important as the word die could also be viewed in its sexual connotation; London itself becomes conflated with the 'heart alluring damsels' where the erotic tension between the writer and women becomes intertwined and interchangeable with the city.

The gaze of sexuality is reflected back on to the city, where Taleb notes that the spectacle of propriety is always being threatened and thus needs to be controlled:

I could not help admiring some girls, who, either from the coldness of the weather or their natural high flow of spirits, disdained to walk deliberately, but bounded through the crowd, without touching, anyone, as if they had been going down a dance. (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 45)

He does employ Orientalist tropes in the mode he muses on 'the beauty of the women, and their grace in dancing, [which] delighted my imagination; while the variety and melody of their music charmed my senses.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 63) The power to 'gaze' is assumed by the Oriental; it is he who sexualises the social terrain and it is he who conquers it. He makes vague references to the 'hospitality' on offer; the spectre of sexual desire and fulfilment is left to the reader to decipher. Taleb proclaims that in 'these parties I enjoyed every luxury my heart could desire.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 63) When spurning the invitation to meet Colonel Cockerell, Taleb also recalls that prior 'to my leaving London, Cupid had planted one of his arrows in my bosom, I found it impossible to resist the desire of returning to the presence of my fair one.' (Abu Taleb, *Westward Bound*, 69)

Although the majority of erotic exchanges described in the travelogue are scopophilic, this recollection, illustrates his willingness to actively pursue sexual gratification with English women at times of his choosing.

In a poem dedicated to a lady called Miss Julia Burrell, Taleb proclaims that ‘although the European be ruler over a part of India; yet behold an Indian who is sovereign of all Europe.’¹²² Within this paradigm, Taleb can be seen as echoing Frantz Fanon’s provocative claim that sexual liaisons between white women and black men disturbed the colonial power structure, where Taleb is able to ‘grasp white civilisation and dignity and make them [his].’¹²³ Taleb subverts the sexual power structure of colonialism and actively pursues his erotic opportunities, and thus displaces another Orientalist trope, that of the effeminate Indian native. His masculinity is asserted by delineating a process where he is in pursuit and in control of the sexual exchange.

Taleb’s travel writing and ethnography in England highlights a pre-colonial sensibility that challenges both Orientalist discourse and its subsequent critique by Said as a completely hegemonic framework. His utilisation of the grand tour narrative allowed him to ‘conquer’ Britain in a literary and metaphorical fashion that can be viewed as a negation of the Orientalist epistemologies and ontologies, that Said has indicated, enveloped the Orient without response. In this respect, Taleb can be viewed as post-colonial, or should I say post-Orientalist in a time when neither term had been conceived. He was able to reverse the exotic and erotic gaze back upon the imperial metropole, whilst exhorting the need for social cultures to be viewed relatively and out of the epistemic framework dictated to the Orient by the West. The following investigation concentrates on the high colonial period and the

attempts of Behramji Malabari to engage with the Empire in its own terms and on its own territory. I will investigate how Malabari co-opted himself into the Victorian formation of colonial modernities in a way that allowed him to project a reformist agenda that extended to Britain as well as India.

Behramji Malabari – Travelling/Home

Behramji Malabari was a writer and social reformer who wrote out of a social context far removed from the previous two writers. He was part of an Indian social movement of the time that saw several others sail to Britain in the nineteenth century. In Malabari's case, the specific motivation behind his travel to Britain was to lobby the British government on the issue of widow remarriage and raising the age of consent for women in India. Born into the small but elite Parsi community in Bombay, Malabari wrote within the era of high colonialism, whereas Taleb and Mahomed wrote out of an age still being imperially shaped. His career as a writer could best be described as interdisciplinary: he can variously be described as anthropologist, journalist, poet, social activist and travel writer. In the opening section of his travelogue, *The Indian Eye on English Life: or, Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer*, published in 1893, Malabari self-consciously presses his claims as a scholar of reverse Orientalism. He proclaims:

What could be more natural for a student of humanity, a pilgrim in search of the truths of life, than that he should now wish for a look at the other world, beyond the seas, whose fortunes are so closely knit with those of his own country? (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 1-2)

He instantly asserts himself within the grand narrative of modernity by professing that 'no study is so absorbing for a man as a study of human progress; no method so successful for it as the comparative method.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 2) However, Malabari shifts the centre ground from the metropole to the colony: Britain is balanced against India, British manners are compared to Indian social mores, both societies are probed for their similarities as well as their differences; however, the 'gaze' is directed from within the colony. The power structure of

colonial representation is reversed, but not imitated. Malabari acts as critic for British society but India is not framed as a yardstick in the way the classic Orientalist would reference his criticisms of the Other against a civilised, moral, progressive, stable and ultimately superior West.

Social and political analysis is embedded within the text but the text is not constructed as a social tract or commentary, it is a series of episodes and sketches that describe Malabari's wanderings in the city, interspersed with social criticism. However, it always remains faithful to the conventions of European travel writing. Simonti Sen argues that the appropriation of certain Western forms perversely empowered travellers like Malabari to turn their eye critically on to their imperial 'masters.'¹²⁴ Although Simonti Sen's focus was specifically Bengali travel literature, it is indeed apposite when applied to Malabari's *The Indian Eye*; his narration expresses deep concern and reservation about the spread of industrialisation. He proclaims, 'fierce is the struggle for existence in the West. Life and health are being ground down under the wheels of modern civilisation.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 122) Capitalism is chided for the social inequality inflicted upon the lower classes, 'due to the arrogance of capital in its dealing with labour, especially with unskilled labour.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 122-23) Indian society is portrayed as more innocent and altruistic than the modernising British social order. Malabari objects to British culture and its cult of individualism when he pleads:

Let us remain ignorant in India. I had much rather that India remained superstitious enough to worship her stone-God. That means something of self-sacrifice; it lifts the worshipper out of himself. The worship of self is the worst form of idolatry. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 75)

British conceptions of progress are rejected by Malabari as wholly applicable to the various communities in India. Instead, he reverses the 'gaze' of judgement that

would denounce India as a society riven by inequality within the lexicon of Orientalism, and pleads for a re-evaluation of the values he views in Europe which conflate self-interest with progress and modernity.

The crucial difference that separates Malabari's project from that of the conventional Orientalist, as criticised by Said, is the fervour with which he pursues social reform within India. Indian society and his own cultural roots are cherished and defended at various points but they are also critiqued where modern and Western values are deemed superior. Sen has argued that these contradictory impulses were at the heart of many Indian travellers who made the journey to the West:

The fact of Indianness [was] a fact of shame as well as pride - shame in the subjecthood, backwardness and worldly impotence ... [but also] pride not only in ... reaction or hitting back, but in the more sedate sense of belonging to cultural norms and forms that one cherishes and cannot live without. (Simonti Sen, *Travels to Europe Self and Other*, 15)

India is variously described as 'poor, ignorant and superstitious' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 125) by Malabari who is not afraid to counterpoint his own society negatively with the social structure of Britain. When praising the charitable nature of British society, he writes: 'there is no caste or sect here to slay the hand of charity; workers in the field of humanity work together as brothers and sisters, giving readily unto all that are ready.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 88) As a travel writer, Malabari is not just reporting back his testimony to the Indian reader on the intricacies of Western modernity, he engages in a complex negotiation with his own connections to European constructs and his alienation from Indian norms. The fact of travel brings into focus his displacement from Indian norms and subsequent commitment to Western modernity; however, this displacement evokes a sense of re-engagement

with what has been left behind; the journey West leads Malabari to a place that complicates his conceptions of home and abroad.

Inderpal Grewal analogously states that ‘travel, as a mode of understanding and as a discourse of power ... constructs authenticity through separation and alienation from what is traditional ... [but also as] a means to regain that land’ and this dynamic of loss and gain ‘created subjects such as Malabari with complex modes of connection to ... [the West] as well as to an emerging notion of Self and community.’ (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 144) The fact of travel for Malabari, presents a shift in his theoretical assumptions held before his journey; it also leads him to variously challenge colonial pretensions of masculinity. By embarking on a journey to the imperial centre, he is able to expose Britain as unable to fulfil itself within the epistemological framework it presents to colonised people in India. Grewal states that Malabari’s travelogue challenges Orientalist definitions of the West, not just in its framing of the Orient, but also in that it offers a ‘critical view of England that does not fulfil the rhetoric of the Colonizers.’ (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 151)

Malabari’s narration, though hyperbolic at times when comparing India to Britain, exhorts: ‘poor as India is, I thank god she knows not much of the poverty to which parts of Great Britain have been accustomed – the East end of London, for instance ... and other congested centres of life.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 85) Malabari picturesquely narrates that ‘side by side with such heart rending scenes of misery one sees gorgeously dressed, luxury, flaunting ... in the streets ... here, again, one has a vivid picture of the extremes of wealth and poverty.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 86-7) Western modernity is described as splintering the connection between

‘body and soul’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 85) and Britain is ‘described as a land of extremes,’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 31) again another reversal of Orientalist definitions that would instinctually posit India within such a framework. The next passage probes the varying technologies of sex that were being constructed within Victorian society by asking what effect colonial travellers had on these social constructions. Were these incursions commensurable with or antagonistic to Victorian conceptions of civility and sexual propriety?

Malabari and the Technologies of Sex

Throughout the travelogue, Malabari explores the social tensions between the state and the people in Victorian society that were a result of the various technologies of sex that the government constructed to regulate everyday life. Michel Foucault theorised that discourses of sexuality multiplied during this period and paradoxically enveloped society just as sex was repressed from speech. Conceptions and implementations of Victorian civility in Foucault's argument were intrinsically infused by power; sex became disciplined by the state in order to perpetuate its own power and status. He contends that the discourse of sexuality became a 'determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail.' (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 18) However, Foucault's thesis is entirely restricted to the West and the varying technologies of sex, such as population control, the family unit, sexual health etc., are prescribed as discourses purely within a European framework, they are not probed within a colonial space.

Malabari's textual writing and zeal for social reform can be viewed within a context where the colonial traveller actively engaged with such a project. For example, his assertion that 'overpopulation is becoming perhaps the most serious problem of the day,' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 78) was typical of what Foucault had identified as the increasing 'regularization' of life in the Victorian era. According to Foucault's thesis, the British government during this period looked to control people's sexuality, because it viewed stability as essential to the health of the public body (nation state/the Empire). As an Indian traveller who first of all had to deal with and assimilate himself within a mixed society, Malabari shows himself to

be aware of these British social expectations. He also recognises the difference in social structure between Britain and India when he proclaims that: ‘woman is a presence and a power in Europe. [Whereas] in Asia woman is a vague entity.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 22) Malabari can be viewed as both a resister to and a participator in the discourses of Victorian sexuality.

Initially in *The Indian Eye*, Malabari appears uncomfortable with the threat of sexual impropriety. One particular threat is recounted whilst travelling on the bus: ‘I am between two of the prettiest and quietest [girls], feeling a strange discomfort ... I feel my fair neighbours knocking against me every moment. They do not seem to mind it at all; it is a matter of course.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 31-32) This sense of apprehension is demonstrated as soon as he arrives in the bustling metropolis of London, however, this unease is quickly overcome and Malabari begins to selectively engage with Victorian sexual politics. In dealing effectively with the challenges of a mixed society, Malabari demonstrates dexterity in dealing with differing technologies of sex in India and Britain. However, despite the various technologies of sex that were constructed in Victorian Britain, there was still a greater tolerance in British society, for public displays of sexuality such as kissing than in India. He reasons:

These sights, queer as they are, do not offend me now. They would be an eyesore amongst our own people. I myself could hardly bear them at first; but that is no reason why I should judge others in such a matter, before I am well equipped to form a judgement. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 32)

Malabari’s portrayal of these encounters display a certain type of detachment and disinterestedness, a crucial tactic that undermined Orientalist taxonomies of the effeminised and lascivious Indian which in turn expressed his own worthiness, as both a colonial and British subject, to negotiate the modern metropolis.

Antoinette Burton has argued that Malabari's depiction of these scenes staked a claim for 'belonging, to subjecthood, through such a public display of manhood – in this case, of manly restraint in the presence of so many English female bodies – indicates his investment in proving a certain kind of gender-specific claim to civilised behaviour.'¹²⁵ However, the sense of erotic tension in the text is undeniable; Malabari states:

You have sometimes the mis-fortune of having women beside you, with a trick of leaning on your arm or shoulder when they are quite capable of supporting themselves; of giggling, of laughing a dry hollow laugh, or of trying otherwise to draw you out of yourself. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 33)

Burton reasons that Indian travellers such as Malabari and Taleb before him 'fetishized the English woman's "public body" precisely in order to manage and reorder transgressive desires that did not always begin with them.' (Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 171) Malabari, to a lesser extent than Taleb, is still willing to do this and explicitly reverse the erotic gaze. He muses on English femininity:

It is the fresh looks and the free healthy motion of the body that give[s] English women their peculiar charm,' whilst also describing them as 'so delicate in nerves that they will shriek and faint at sight of the very distress their extravagance tends to create or to intensify. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 92)

Furthermore, he exercises his masculinity in a different form to that of Taleb, instead of simply eroticising the British female; he co-opts himself within a narrative of social reform, female rights and Victorian morality, British sexual technologies that were being exported to the colonised world, but as I will also demonstrate, circulated within Britain itself.

In co-opting himself within conceptions of Victorian civility, Malabari displays an active engagement with British sexual politics that were prevalent at the time. This dynamic in his work complicates the idea that colonial modernity was

fashioned unilaterally. Malabari recognised that purity movements in Britain were becoming increasingly relevant during the late nineteenth century. One such purity campaign led by the Christian feminist, Josephine Butler, resulted in the suspension of licensed prostitution that was constituted by the last contagious diseases act in 1869. As a further consequence, the age of female consent was also raised in Britain during the same year.¹²⁶ These legal shifts were instrumental behind Malabari's push for the age of consent to be raised in India. In being able to understand the political significance of purity movements, and their ability to constitute change, Malabari demonstrates a selective and subjective reading of British colonial politics. Richard Phillips reinforces this argument when he states that the:

Appropriation of selected Western laws and values that could be portrayed as modern and progressive may be seen not simply as a form of defence to imperialism but rather as a strategy for self-employment, [where] colonial subjects declare loyalty towards and affinity for the powers that be, as they seek for themselves a new place in the global order. (Phillips, *Sex, Politics and Empire*, 76)

Moreover, Phillips would argue that Malabari was not just a passive reader of colonial modernity as a narrative; but that he 'was able to selectively draw on purity movements that in England were closely identified with Christianity, recasting and reformulating [them into] a focused and ostensibly secular, Indian purity agenda.' (Phillips, *Sex, Politics and Empire*, 74) Malabari espouses a concoction of Victorian civility and a specifically Indian cultural respectability as the basis for his reformist social agenda; he recognises that 'early marriages are best suited to our requirements, though there is no excuse at all for infant marriages.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 165) This ability to utilise the lexicon of the coloniser for his own ends demonstrates Malabari's agency as a colonial citizen and thus complicates the boundaries between colony and metropole as being valid in binary terms.

I would argue that not only does Malabari co-opt himself into the discourse of Victorian sexuality he is also able to reverse the gaze of normativity and deflect it back onto the imperial power. He dedicates a chapter each in *'The Indian Eye'* to sex and the family life. Malabari displaces Victorian sensibility as the barometer of acceptability and exposes the contradictions and inconsistencies at the heart of British sexuality in mainstream British society. First of all, he raises doubts on the equality of women within what he views as still a dominant patriarchal British society: 'even in this enlightened age. When she is recognised as the mother, that is the maker of a nation, its law treats her distinctly as an inferior being. And society puts her seal of approval on this man-made law.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 156-157) Though relatively, he even goes onto call for women to be given the vote, he questions: 'where is the danger in a number of well, qualified women exercising the vote?' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 155) Furthermore, he states that the 'time seems to have come for a moderate instalment of women's suffrage in England.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 155) He moves this critique of British sexual sensibility on by the manner in which he compares the infidelity of British men with the polygamy of some Indian males. This was a particular frame of reference that Orientalists used to define Orientals as sexually promiscuous and Indian society as patriarchal in the extreme. 'If it came to that, one might say there was [nothing] to choose between the cold-blooded 'respectability' of the Indian polygamist, with his well stocked zenana of wifelings, and the occasional escapade of the English husband of one wife.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 167) Malabari's cultural comparison undercuts Victorian conceptions of moral superiority, whilst also displaying a willingness to assert his own moral disposition over British social mores.

Malabari also analyses the importance of the family, and its disciplinary function in creating an adequate colonial subject. This is a dynamic Foucault has termed the biopower of the state, where ‘between the state and the individual, sex became an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it.’ (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 26) He includes a series of descriptions of family life in Britain and compares them to the family unit prevalent in India: ‘the life of a decent English home is a life of equality among all the members,’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 62) and that ‘the parent is as slow to assert his or her authority as the child is to abuse his or her freedom.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 64)

This positive depiction of the Victorian home sees Malabari speak within the discourse of Victorian respectability that was viewed as the harbinger of fashioning the ‘proper’ colonial subject. Burton elaborates:

What holds the travelogue together, both structurally and symbolically, is the twin conviction that the English home functions as the nursery of British subjecthood in the imperial nation and that the men of India had the capacity to observe and appreciate its civilising function. (Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 183)

However, I would argue that not only does Malabari offer admiration, he also proves adept at penetrating these polyvalent discourses and subsequently deploys them selectively, critiquing the social structure where he views it as dysfunctional. One such example is when he labels the abstention from marriage and the relative breakdown of the family unit in London as ‘a sad problem, and one turns away from it in despair. The vice, the shame, the suffering caused by this unnatural state of affairs amongst the lower orders can hardly be conceived by an outsider.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 73) Malabari also chastises ‘the life of the English mother [which]

appears in one important respect to be tinged with an unpardonable selfishness. [As] too frequently her children are not nursed by her.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 80) Using this paradigm Malabari can be viewed to both co-opt himself within the narrative of Victorian civility, and echo the discursive and disciplinary function that sought to regulate British social ills.

Ann Stoler, in her study on Foucault’s *A History of Sexuality*, states that the technology of sex was intrinsic to the implementation, effectiveness and mobility of Western imperialism and by implication its Orientalist manifestations. She argues that these ‘discourses do more than prescribe suitable behaviour; they locate how fundamentally bourgeois identity has been tied to notions of being “European” and being “white” and how sexual prescriptions served to secure and delineate the authentic, first class citizens of the [Western] nation state.’¹²⁷ Stoler criticises Foucault’s framing of sexuality as a purely European discourse which limited the influence of colonies and colonial people within it. She argues that the technologies of sex were constituted just as much in the colonies as in the West, arguing that ‘colonialism was not a secure bourgeois project. It was not only about the importation of middle-class sensibilities to the colonies, but about the making of them.’ (Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 99) Moving Stoler’s argument on further, I would argue that British technologies of sex could also be moulded from within the West by colonised peoples, Malabari being one such example. By campaigning for the age of consent to be raised in India and championing widow’s rights there, Malabari can be seen to imbibe and then remould the discourses of Victorian sexuality that were being exported to the colonies at the time and recapitulate them within an Indian framework.

However, his *Indian Eye* when resituated within the metropole engages with the technologies of sex in a strategic manner that has hitherto been ignored. Victorian technologies of sex are appropriated but are deployed in modes that are commensurable with his own cultural sensibility, hence the British family unit is praised on the one hand but dismissed when it fails to live up to its own civil pretensions. More provocatively, it is also critiqued when it fails to reach Malabari's own cultural and social barometers. An example of this is overtly displayed when Malabari comments on the public nature of kissing acceptable within British society: 'it is curious how we Orientals differ from Europeans in the matter of kissing. We hold it too sacred to be overdone, or to be done in the public.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 232) Malabari and other Indian travellers actively engaged with Victorian sexual politics to a degree that cannot be satisfied as purely mimetic or participant. I would argue that they were constitutive elements in the evolution of what Foucault termed the bio-politic management of life, and thus they ultimately disrupt ideas of a singular European modernity devoid of Oriental influence. The ensuing focus is on the role of London as the imperial hub in Malabari's counter narrative where I will analyse his ability to both narrate and navigate the urban landscape, a delineation which both consolidates and transforms the city.

Reconstructing the City

Much of Malabari's travelogue is spent perusing the streets of London. He assumes the role of the colonial flaneur, whose movements represent a challenge to the technologies of power and control of the imperial centre. Malabari himself was not entirely alien to the spectre of a bustling city; he was born and raised in Bombay, a strategic port that was not unfamiliar with crowded streets, foreign travellers and the machinations of colonial economics. Just as his Parsi identity was connected to Bombay, his sojourn to London connects his subjecthood with that of London itself, he becomes part of the city, and he is able to both consume and produce it. Jonathan Raban in his urban psychological study *Soft City* (1988) argues that 'cities unlike villages and small towns are plastic by nature. We mould them in our images: they, in their turn, shape us by the resistance they offer when we try to impose our own personal form on them.'¹²⁸ This is a pertinent description of the negotiations Malabari encounters in London that shape both his identity and that of London itself. In doing so he becomes not just a colonial traveller but a British citizen.

As a citizen he tries to mould and make sense of the city for his Indian readers; the smallest details are offered regarding his movements, how he 'jump[s] into a bus from Ludgate Hill ... [is] carried off to Waterloo ... [and] takes the return bus then for Charing Cross.' (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 37) He self-consciously postulates himself as both an insider and a tourist who maps the city:

The best way of doing London is to tramp the streets and lanes, if you can, in the company of a retired policeman or friendly clergymen. Nothing answers so well if you want an insight into the life of the people. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 176-177)

Malabari analogously becomes the ‘policeman’ and ‘clergyman’ for his Indian reader; he continually names and references streets, landmarks and underground stations, as well as commenting on the people within them. In doing so, he assumes the power to represent the metropolis; the imperial centre becomes his projection and territory, consequently, Victorian conceptions of London as being quintessentially British are disturbed by the city’s ability to be reinvented through colonised eyes.

This Orientalist reversal is signalled from the very beginning of the travelogue, the Orientalists’ search for wisdom and enlightenment is mimicked by Malabari who proclaims ‘to the searcher after enlightenment ... [London] is a Budh-Gaya; a Benares for the sinner in search of emancipation. Damp dirty, noisy London, thou art verily a Jerusalem for the weary soldier of faith.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 2) The journey into antiquity is turned upside down; London is an image of modernity, Malabari’s quest is for an enlightenment that the East can reclaim. A series of challenges to Malabari’s place in the city are posited, he continually fends off attempts to defraud him, protesting that ‘more than once have I had to part with a shilling for no more than two minutes drive.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 176) However, he becomes alert to these challenges and then overcomes them. Malabari ties his own negotiation of colonial identity with his battle to get to grips with London itself; he states that ‘as I grow older in London, I grow wiser.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 177) As he maps London, his own place within the greater colonial world begins to be re-evaluated. He comments on the city’s slums, ‘I have known riversides swelling horribly for weeks, with no one in or out of office anxious to abate the nuisance.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 43) These observations and senses lead him to question the ‘artificial civilisation of the West, dominated by king coal and emperor iron ... [as it] has its price, which is paid every day in disease and death,

in accident and crime.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 46) However, Malabari does find comfort in the urban space as it paradoxically allows him to disappear: ‘oh the solitude of finding yourself in a strange crowd.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 178) This statement can also be viewed metaphorically. Malabari remoulds his identity in transit, where the freedom of the city changes him as it evolves itself. Raban analogously states that ‘the freedom of the city is enormous. Here one can choose and invent one’s society, and live more deliberately than anywhere else. Nothing is fixed, the possibilities of personal change and renewal are endless.’ (Raban, *Soft City*, 245)

Antoinette Burton has argued that turning London into a spectacle was a strategic move by travellers like Malabari as they ‘sought to compensate for being made into a spectacle [themselves].’¹²⁹ Moreover, for Malabari his portrayal of London is not merely rhetorical or responsive; metaphorically he becomes the city himself. The colonial spectacle that is London: its diversity, colour and cosmopolitan fabric, but also its sense of fracture and anonymity, are reflected in the contradictory and multiplicity of colonial modernities Malabari assumes and adopts. He notes that ‘the construction of London suggests serious thoughts to a stranger. What with railways underground, running through the bowels of the earth ... tramways, omnibuses, and ... [cars] working above ground, the city appears perforated from end to end.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 45) This sense of fissure is correlative of colonialism as a whole, as London becomes a metaphor for the fracture felt by Indian travellers and settlers in Britain. This fragmentation felt by Malabari, according to Grewal, is a colonial modernity that is different to that felt by Western peoples. She states that ‘the fragmentation of modernity implies something else - a sense of distancing brought about by alien others that is different from the

experience of modernity among people in the West.’ (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 152) I would disagree slightly with Grewal; I concur that Malabari’s engagement with modernity and London is different to the native Londoner as an Indian traveller; however, he does engage with modernity in a way that does not relegate him to the peripheries of both the colonial and urban landscape, as Grewal’s assertion would seem to indicate.

Instead of being relegated to the periphery or even outside the metropole by colonial politics, Malabari navigates himself to the ‘the heart of the empire.’ He assumes the mantle of Orientalist and conqueror, as the East subsumes and places itself at the very epicentre of the imperial world. London’s East End is described as an Orient within the West:

What a sight it is! The whole of the gorgeous East, instinct with life, spread out before the spectator. It is a marvel and a mystery of art, which even the most sanguine imagination, could hardly have been prepared for. Apart from the scenery – warmth and variety of the East sobering down to the solid monotony of the West, and this uniformity of the West again calling the glow and versatility of the East – the diversity of tongues and costumes, of manners and customs, is bewildering. (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 215-216)

As opposed to formulating Malabari’s colonial sensibility as entirely ambivalent and his London as entirely illusory, I argue that Malabari played an important role in establishing a post-colonial space for the Indian immigrant in both the metropole and Britain as a whole. His journey and mental cartography, and other travellers like him, mapped out a journey as well as a ‘home’ space for the post-colonial to find outside of India, a social fabric he speculates as being a ‘panorama of Eastern and Western civilisations at their best.’ (Malabari, *The Indian Eye*, 214-15) Malabari was a reverse Orientalist in the sense he ‘created’ and ‘conquered’ a British space for himself before the onset of modern multicultural Britain.

Chapter Two – Women Travellers

The travels of Indians into the heart of the colonial power was by no means a purely patriarchal act, the journeys of ayahs, students and royalty also demonstrated that the dialogical flow of colonialism encompassed women as well as men. Colonialism has been viewed as patriarchal violence inflicted upon the feminine Orient, however, such a gendered construction cannot account for the roles of Western women in the functioning and facilitation of the imperial project and their ability to be both producers as well as consumers of the colonial production of knowledge. Reina Lewis in her book *Gendering Orientalism* has criticised Edward Said for overlooking women as potent colonialists:

In *Orientalism* gender only occurs as a metaphor for the negative characterization of the Orientalized other as ‘feminine’ or in a single reference to a woman writer. Said never questions women’s apparent absence as producers of Orientalist discourse or as agents within colonial power. (Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, 4)

This assertion stresses the need for colonial histories to include women as writers, explorers, ethnographers and most of all as Orientalists. When analysing the effect women had in the production and functionality of Oriental discourse one has to look at its variations. How were women intrinsic to the formulation of dominant patriarchal knowledges? Was their output as virulent and hegemonic as male discourse? Is it possible to think of a feminine Orientalist gaze?

The presence of female travellers to India in particular produced a litany of travelogues, memoirs and novels that were framed along the lines of dominant modes of Orientalist production. Rana Kabbani has argued that Victorian women

were placed outside the power dynamics of Victorian travel writing where the travelogue remained ‘an intrinsic part of patriarchal discourse, for it fed on and ultimately served the hierarchies of power, ... they remained token travellers only, who were forced by various pressures to articulate the values of patriarchy.’ (Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, 7) However, I would contest Kabbani’s passive conception, by stressing that novelists such as Emily Eden and Fanny Parkes as well as travellers such as Annie Besant and Flora Annie Steel were all contributors to a female Orientalism that travelled, displaying agency that was at times both sympathetic to and critical of its subject. Allied to the Romanticists and Anglicists, this production of knowledge analogously consolidated India along patriarchal lines as a forgotten realm, a feminine terrain that was frozen in history. In this regard, their writings share many of the dominant tropes of male Orientalism. However, to submerge these works within the dominant strains of patriarchal Orientalism would be to assume that Orientalism was a unified structure, and to do so would overlook its very strength and adaptability as a discourse. Sara Mills has argued that ‘certain discursive elements are shared by both male- and female-authored texts, but they are nevertheless received and commented upon and marketed differently ... [where] there may be negotiations in women’s texts which result in differences which seem due to gender.’ (Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 6) A production line of knowledges that facilitated the power of colonialism for over two hundred years was multivalent by its very nature, and feminism and femininity were discourses that fed into and out of the cultural hegemony of Orientalism. Feminist scholars such as Antoinette Burton have argued that the Orient figured as a fertile ground for the shaping of western feminism, where ‘empire provided opportunities to maternal imperialists, feminist allies and activists to test their independence from the constraints of

patriarchal society.’¹³⁰ Thus, by implication colonised women became the terrain on which Western women sought to validate and shape their own social freedoms.

Burton has argued that the Victorian period was the backdrop to Western feminism’s rigorous attempts to insert itself at the heart of colonial modernity. She proposes that ‘by imagining the women of India as helpless colonial subjects, British feminists constructed “the Indian woman” as a foil against which to gauge their own progress.’¹³¹ The colonised woman then figured as a barometer for the female coloniser and was not constructed as a substantial figure within the narrative of colonialism. They were encased within a framework that encompassed the Orient as a whole; labelled as backward, idle, hypersexual, willing victims who needed to be reintroduced into history. Ideas of global sisterhood were fashioned to engender this ‘invocation of Indian women as enslaved, degraded, and in need of salvation by their British feminist “sisters.”’ (Burton, ‘The White Woman’s Burden,’ 145) To do this they also utilised a classic Orientalist technique, which was to universalise the figure of the Oriental woman, a process Gayatri Spivak has lucidly described as ‘worlding’ in which the third world woman was actualised within the political reality of Western hegemony. Spivak bases her criticism at the level of literature:

To consider the Third World as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation fosters the emergence of “the Third World” as a signifier that allows us to forget that “worlding,” even as it expands the empire.¹³²

Burton, adopting an historical approach, proclaims that ‘British feminists of the period *posited* “women” the world over as one class, one race, one nation- a static type that, in “less civilised” societies than Britain, ... [were] corrupted by heathen cultures and religions.’ (Burton, ‘The White Woman’s Burden,’ 145) Female constructions of the Orient were thus delineated along the coordinates of classic

Orientalism, there were variations, but Victorian feminists adopted the dominant tropes propagated during the high period of colonialism. This dynamic allowed them to co-opt themselves into the Orientalist project; and by implication they positioned themselves away from being the Other within the imperial body.

This productive tension between the discourses of feminism and Orientalism presented Western female travellers and writers with a problem; they needed to reconcile their dominant position as colonialists against the Orient with the subservient position they held as women within their own patriarchal societies. Thus, it must be stated that their involvement in the production of Oriental knowledge indicates the hierarchy of power that existed within the strata of the colonial world. There was not a monolithic strand of power that flew through the discourse of Orientalism; it had different levels, effects and motivations. Women Orientalists need to be placed into a context that views them as ‘agents whose mixture of observation and fantasy about the East is specifically gendered because of the social and psychological restraints on their experience and representation of the Orient.’ (Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, 184) Lewis argues for a gendered Orientalism that accounts for the multiplicity of female positions on both sides of the colonial divide: ‘it is with this cluster of dominant and alternative Orientalist discourse, then that women’s accounts need to be read, in order to allow for the variety of oppositional and collaborative positionalities assumed by both Occidental and Oriental women cultural agents.’ (Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, 159) Furthermore, Lewis moves this cocktail of Orientalism and feminism one step further by calling for an awareness of female Orientalisms that highlight the dialogical flows of knowledge that both counter-posed and linked the female coloniser with the subaltern ‘woman.’

Any conception of Indian women as reverse Orientalists would first need to be located within this space that accounts for the power/knowledge of female colonial production. The Indian woman, positioned as a subaltern in this context, is a figure who has been culturally, socio-politically and discursively dispossessed, both in Britain (Orientalism) and India (nationalism). Spivak states: 'both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant.' (Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' 28) Rana Kabbani has also emphasised that Oriental women were placed into an invidious position during the high colonial period; they were 'doubly demeaned as women, and as "Orientals" ... [where for the West] they offered a prototype of the sexual in a repressive age, and were coveted as the permissible expression of a taboo topic.' (Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, 7) Indian women figured most prominently in male Orientalist discourse as sexualised figures who both fulfilled Oriental exotic fantasies but also figured as the next frontier for the Victorian reforming zeal to conquer and civilise. Victorian feminists were also conscious imbibers of this discourse and psychologically constructed spatial tropes such as the 'harem' and the 'zenana' as sites that were teeming with idleness, intrigue, ignorance and sexuality. The following section will analyse the writings of Victorian feminists, how they placed themselves within the varying discourses that permeated the colonial enterprise, in forms such as travelogues, social documents and histories; texts that constitute a female Orientalism in its own right.

Female Orientalism

Western women were engaged throughout the Victorian era in a variety of Orientalising projects: they wrote novels, travelogues and memoirs of their time travelling and living in the 'East.' Antoinette Burton, provocatively paraphrasing Rudyard Kipling, has argued that Victorian feminists saw their role in the Orient as 'the white woman's burden,' a natural obligation and duty that was derivative of the imperial project itself. She has argued that 'their concern for Indian women was part of a complex of cultural assumptions which, shaped ... by an emerging middle class feminist perspective ... dictated a "white woman's burden" that was as natural to them as empire itself appeared to be.' (Burton, 'The White Woman's Burden,' 152) Nineteenth century British feminism was thus engendered as much by imperialism as by domestic reforms, where feminists 'sought empowerment by a variety of means – education, the vote, welfare legislation not the least of which was by allying their cause with British imperial rule.' (Burton, 'The White Woman's Burden,' 152) The natural extension of such discourses being intertwined with the colonial project was the movement of female British teachers, administrators, political activists and writers to the Indian subcontinent. Autobiography and the travelogue were again the most prevalent forms by which the Orient was placed under the female imperial gaze. Writers such as Fanny Parkes, Flora Annie Steel and Annie Besant all engaged in a process that sought to write the Orient from their own British feminist perspectives. This is not to say that they form a monolithic branch of female Orientalists; there were contrasts and correlatives in the way they represented India to their readerships. Some were sympathetic to local Indian patriarchal customs and others were scathing in their appraisal of them, however, all sought to 'en-gender'

within India a narrative of progress, modernity and social expansion that included women at the heart of these colonial discourses.

Fanny Parkes's *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* first published in 1850 encompasses two volumes and was a typical picturesque travelogue that placed India and most specifically Indian women under the analytical gaze of Orientalism. Parkes was born in 1794 and went to India in 1822, where she spent the next twenty four years living and travelling throughout the subcontinent. She was the daughter of a colonial civil servant (Captain William Archer) and married one herself (Charles Crawford Parkes), subsequently being stationed in Allahabad. This enabled her to reside in India for an extended period of time. As opposed to the influx of memsahibs of the later Victorian period (English women sent to India to be with their husbands), she has been historically viewed as sympathetic to Indian customs and culture and there is no denying that she did indulge in particular Indian cultural practices, such as her appreciation for Indian dress, playing the sitar and learning the indigenous languages (she learnt Urdu).¹³³ Parkes also demonstrated an agency and subversive attitude towards colonial policies that she deemed to be too oppressive or inapplicable within an Indian setting, especially the missionary zeal of administrators such as Charles Grant and the wider evangelical movement. However, her status as an Indophile does not place her outside of the Orientalist paradigm, as William Dalrymple has attempted to argue in his introduction to his edition of the text.¹³⁴ She was married into the Indian civil service and thus was complicit in the functioning of the Empire and its cultural and political hegemony. This cultural hegemony functions as an undercurrent in her travelogue and its representation of India and its many peoples.

In her personal account, Parkes employs typical Orientalist tropes in her framing of the Indian people; she almost immediately in her travels writes of her encounter with an alien landscape: ‘little did I think it would ever be my fate to visit such an uncivilized island,’¹³⁵ where the women were ‘very idle; in fact, there appear[ed] no necessity for exertion.’ (Parkes, *Wanderings...*, 16) The ‘native’ woman is also sexualised within the lexicon of exotica. On visiting the palace of Shah Jahan and Noor-Jahan, Parkes states that: ‘I was now in the deserted zenana of the most beautiful woman recorded in history; and one whose talents and whose power over the sovereign, made her, in fact, the actual sovereign.’ (Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 365) One is left in no doubt what type of power and influence Parkes is alluding to; she offers an opaque allusion to the power of Oriental sexuality. Conversely, Indian women are also framed as victims, where they are portrayed as being the exploited figures of a backward social system. Polygamy and the zenana figure as two particular tropes that are consistently placed under the analytical microscope of feminist discourse. Parkes muses on the discontent festering in the hearts of Muslim women in regards to polygamy: ‘the ladies all look upon me as pattern: they do not admire a system of having three or four rivals, however well pleased the gentlemen may be with the custom.’ (Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 231) Thus, Parkes lays the grounds for the overall colonial project, to change the native system for the benefit of the natives, a discourse designed to reconsolidate the Orientalists’ position of converting the Orient into what it should be and not what it is.

However, the voices of the Indian women are never given depth or texture, they figure as silhouettes in the narrative designs of the female imperialist. In these ‘narratives the voices of Indian women appear only erratically and when ... quoted it

is rarely mentioned whether the woman in question spoke to the interviewer in English or through an interpreter.’ (Burton, ‘The White Woman’s Burden,’ 152) As a consequence, the female Orientalist assumed the voice of the native woman; their hopes and fears were projected through British feminist sensibilities. In one passage, the native woman is cast as temptress:

[Her] name is Gosseina; she is not pretty, but possesses great influence over her lover. This girl, some fourteen months ago, was dancing at the residency for twenty-five rupees a night: and a woman of such a low caste not even a sa’is would have married her. (Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 194)

Kabbani has stressed that this erotic motif employed by Parkes served as a consistent strain within Orientalist representations of Eastern women and was typical of Victorian prejudices towards the Orient, she states that the Eastern temptress’s ‘learning serves only to please and placate a man – it has no ... [other] function at all.’ (Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, 51) This passage highlights how Victorian women also framed the native woman upon a sexual terrain; however, I would contest that when analysed in depth the passage also betrays the sexual fears that were so rigorously regulated during the Victorian era.

Nancy Paxton, in her appraisal of Flora Annie Steel and Annie Besant, two later Victorian feminists, has argued that British female Orientalists wrote about Indian sexuality and its lack of restraint as a surrogate for their own regulations and the sexual technologies that governed their own behaviour. Female Orientalism then was far more about constructing and ordering themselves within the imperial and civilising project than transmitting freedoms to their Indian ‘sisters:’

[These] autobiographical writings about India demonstrates ultimately, then, how the politics of empire worked to circumscribe, not only the rhetoric of feminism but also their discourse about love and sexuality. Both Besant and Steel came to regard their resistance to sexual desire as a sign of spiritual enlightenment or racial superiority, and their example suggest the central role

British imperialism played in defining and imposing an ideology of sexual as well as racial identity.¹³⁶

This sexual discourse was manipulated to frame the Western woman as civilised, strong, moral and chaste, all qualities that were posed against the native but also figured as the very characteristics that engendered the Victorian male and archetypal colonialist. Although Foucault's corpus on sexuality neglects the colonial world to a large degree I would argue that the aforementioned texts were consonant with Victorian sexual discourses that sought to engender rigorous social control through the regularisation of sexuality in all its variances within the Foucauldian model.¹³⁷

The figure of the memsahib can be viewed as an important interlocutor between the discourses of colonialism and feminism. Originally the motivation for the mass influx of white Englishwomen into India had been designed to ensure that sexual as well as loving liaisons between British men and native women were avoided at all costs. As such sexual liaisons were deemed as threatening to the Manichean composition of them and us, which constituted the very heart of the civilising project and its need to civilise. Ronald Hyam, in his seminal text on *Empire and Sexuality* (1990), has theorised that the presence of Western women in the colony was designed to precipitate the self-containment of English men within their own social strata:

The memsahib's function was political: to maintain "civilised standards", especially sexual standards, and to contain the temptations of the male. "Social distance" between ruler and ruled was the policy, especially after the mutiny, and the memsahibs were its instruments. (Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, 119)

The very presence of female writers such as Fanny Parkes and Flora Annie Steel was predicated on this dynamic; their accounts of colonial relations were circumscribed and underpinned by this social stratification. Thus, writers such as Steel were writing

out of a context that required their need, on a textual level at least, to be complicit with these Orientalist constructions that placed them into the colonial setting and were seen as intrinsic to the social control and ultimate success of the colonial project.

A further consequence of this social engineering was the subsequent need to then prevent the miscegenation of Western female sexuality from the threat of the sexually libidinous native; a fear that punctuated the Orientalist textbook. In a variety of female accounts of India in the post mutiny era, the chastity of the Western woman figures as a consistent motif. The purity of the Englishwoman had to be upheld as it was symbolic of the imperial project itself. Indira Ghose in her text on *Women Travellers in Colonial India* (1998) has argued that the threat of miscegenation is consistently processed through the native male and female and not the Western female who was viewed as sexually and morally submissive to Victorian standards of propriety. The 'purity of the English woman was to be upheld above all because she was the repository of the purity of the race. Her own sexual agency was never at issue ... she was not granted sexual agency anyway.'¹³⁸ Steel reinforces this paradigm by never questioning her own Western female sexual desire; it is always the threat of the native male and the rape of the British woman or the sexual desire of the Indian woman who preferred sati to a life of chastity.¹³⁹

Flora Annie Steel was born in Harrow England on April 2nd 1847 and again was married to a member of the Indian civil service (ICS), Henry Steel, who had met her after childhood while he was studying at Cambridge for service in India. She got married to Henry Steel in December 1867 and consequently moved to India with him and continued to reside there from 1868 to 1889. Throughout that time she spent

most of her time in the Punjab region of Northern India where her husband was stationed as part of his duty. Steel was active in Indian governance and social reform, with women's education and welfare a particular areas of focus. In her role as 'maternal imperialist,' she dispensed Western medicines to rural women, opened a girls' school in Kasur and became the local education inspector for the girls' schools in Lahore. (Indrani Sen, *Woman and Empire*, 133) Her missionary and feminist zeal however, existed in tension with her class and racial sympathies. Although she was a critic of many government policies in British India towards the 'native peoples' (especially women), her racial affiliation with the benign aspects of the imperial project meant that she consistently valorised Western values over the threat of miscegenation from Indian culture. Steel viewed the 'white woman' as symbolic of both British superiority and prestige but also as a moral metaphor for the imperial project and thus this sanctity could not be tainted in the eyes of the natives. (Indrani Sen, *Woman and Empire*, 135)

Her initial success as a writer came in 1893 with the publication of a collection of short stories, *From the Five Rivers* and a year later another collection entitled *Tales of the Punjab* (1894). Her most overtly politicised text however, was to come in 1896 with the publication of *On the Face of the Waters* which dealt with the traumatic events of the Indian mutiny of 1857.¹⁴⁰ Throughout these texts, Steel exhibits a certain sympathy for Indian customs, character and rituals; however, she consistently reverts back to Orientalist constructions of the uncivilised native when that figure is perceived to threaten the status quo of colonial power relations. In *On the Face of the Waters* she both feminises and infantilises the intentions of the potentially insubordinate native. In one passage, the natives are referred to as children: 'these really are children – simple, ignorant, obstinate.'¹⁴¹ The courage and

valour of the British officers (framed as the men throughout the text) are counter-posed to the ‘‘scented effeminate’ rebel leaders (referred to as the murderers) where the colonised/coloniser dialectic also assumes that of the master/slave and masculine/feminine polarity.’ (Indrani Sen, *Woman and Empire*, 152) The threat to colonial hegemony is refuted with disdain, in one exchange between Major Erlton and Jim Douglas, two British officers. Erlton exclaims: ‘idiots! As if they stood a chance’ to which Douglas replies ‘they have none. That’s the pity of it.’ (Steel, *On the Face of the Waters*, 161) Steel’s text as a whole, assumes this sense of inevitability about the civilising and moral effects of the colonial project. An Orientalist’s sense of superiority is an undercurrent that infuses the narrative because the native’s rebellion has to lose for their own benefit. Steel vividly expresses this imperial zeal in her autobiography in 1929: ‘I cannot see how India *now* can possibly speak for herself. She has many very vocal sons, but she has an extremely imperfect electorate.’¹⁴² Steel concludes that ‘in time India will govern herself, but only in time.’ (Steel, *The Garden Of Fidelity*, 253)

Flora Annie Steel personified the Victorian Anglicism that had gained the upper hand in the administration of India and was a fervent believer in the civilising effect of imperialism. The zenana is portrayed as both sanctuary and prison by Steel in her novel *From the Five Rivers* which was originally published in 1893. In one passage, Veru the sonless wife of Gunesh Chand, ‘would creep away into one of the dark, windowless rooms opening off the central court-yard ... there, safe from observation, she would weep salt tears over its unconscious face.’¹⁴³ The face she talks of is that of her baby daughter whose future is to reside in seclusion in the zenana, a fate that she decries to such an extent that she questions ‘after all her prayers and alms, why had not fate given her a son?’ (Steel, *From the Five Rivers*,

14) Throughout this passage there is the implicit suggestion that the rigidly domesticated Oriental female is fundamentally disempowered and requires reform. To do this, Steel argues that the Indian woman needs to look to Europe and Western education in order to slough of the burdens of patriarchy, seclusion and superstition. Steel observes that Indian women are fundamentally inert in regards to their inequality and blames this female credulity on traditional belief systems and ignorance. The system of forced marriage is explicitly criticised by Steel who states that ‘marriage in Fatima’s world meant coercion. She had seen most of her contemporaries handed over to a husband without even a pretence of consulting their wishes.’ (Steel, *From the Five Rivers*, 177) Consistently throughout the text the Indian female is portrayed as voiceless; enunciation is provided by her Western ‘sister.’ However, deep within the narrative is the relief at the distance between the native woman and Steel’s own position within the colonial order of things.

Sara Mills in her study on female travel writing, *Discourses of Difference* (1991), has argued that female travel writing of the Orient should not be subsumed within patriarchal conventions, because patriarchy as a discourse itself was inherently turbulent: ‘it is possible to see patriarchy as a system without intentions as a whole. [A system] which is supported by, resisted, given into or passively gone along with by both males and females.’ (Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 18) This assertion allowed the female writers a degree of agency in the way they both represented themselves and the native female that was formed as their subject. Mills has praised female travel accounts for the way they foster a personal engagement with the objects of their study: ‘that elements of women’s travel writing are more heterogeneous and ... act as a critique of the colonialist enterprise since there is a stress on personal involvement and investment on the part of the narrator.’ (Mills,

Discourses of Difference, 106) Although she underplays the extent of Western women as active Orientalists, I would move Mills's argument further forward and stress the ability of Oriental women to also formulate alternative responses to both the discourses of patriarchy and Orientalism, using material that encompassed the personal and private. These reverse accounts also vary slightly from male accounts as they focus on the interior, concentrating variously on personal narratives and familial relationships, where they can also be viewed as active contestants in the overlapping discourses of patriarchy, feminism and Orientalism within the heart of the colonial world.

The harem, the zenana, sati and polygamy all figured as tropes in which to gauge the progress of Western women as well as the degradation of native females. Thus the discursive site on which much of the Orientalist representation was built was dialogical by its very nature. Writers such as Pothum Ragaviah, Cornelia Sorabji and Janaki Majumdar figured themselves and their female heroines within this dialogical framework, thus their employment and appropriation of such discourses was made possible by the malleable nature of this discursive space in the first place. The nexus of power/knowledge could be appropriated and reversed back onto the imperial subject, by constructing narratives that placed the native woman at the centre and then counterposing Western femininity as its surrogate double. Critics such as Sara Mills and their work on female travel writing have provided valuable insights into the importance and validity of female travel accounts within the rubric of colonial discourse. The following section will investigate the earliest example of a subaltern woman who travelled to the West and composed a travelogue that figures as documentation and critique of both colonial relations and Britain itself. I will attempt to place *Pictures of England* (1876) by Pothum Janakummah Ragaviah as a

vital text in the re-evaluation of female travel accounts in colonial discourse, where the Indian female travelogue also needs to be accounted for.

The Pioneering Travels of a Hindustani Lady

Pictures of England, a travelogue by a nineteenth century Hindu lady, was written by Pothum Janakummah Ragaviah in Telugu and translated anonymously into English. It was published in 1876 in Madras by Gantz Brothers publishers.¹⁴⁴ It is the first documented account of a Hindu lady who travelled to the heart of the Empire and then composed a travelogue to chart her historic movement across the ‘kala pani,’ (dark water) where, by implication, she broke her conventional caste obligations. Addressing this issue, the text starts by emphasising the suitability of Britain as a space for the Indian woman, where the rigorous maintenance of caste obligations could be moulded and maintained abroad. A social dynamic could be forged where indigenous Hindu culture and its rituals could adapt to a foreign landscape. In this regard, the travelogue written in her native tongue is an historic example of the ability of Indian women to navigate the political and social obstacles that both local and global patriarchies presented to them in the Victorian world of Empire. The text as a whole adheres to the conventions of the contemporary travelogue, both in tone and structure, and is very reminiscent of the male texts analysed in the previous chapter, in the way it utilises the techniques of the conventional picturesque travelogue to both co-opt and reverse the gaze of normativity back onto the imperial centre. Ragaviah offers a succession of comparisons between Britain and India, often favouring the modernity of the former; however, she is not completely subsumed into a narrative of thrall to the imperial power; she offers criticisms of and defends both Indian culture and British society in a dynamic that can be labelled as reverse Orientalism.

At the beginning of the text, Ragaviah is at pains to describe the pioneering status of her journey, emphasising that her travels are for the benefit of her fellow countrymen, a typical justification for the Orientalist and Imperial project that had propelled the British to the shores of India and the Orient as a whole. Ragaviah states on page one that ‘at the present time a few sensible Hindoos, for the good of their country, occasionally travel to England.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 1-2) In reiterating this idiom, she attacks Indian cultural credulity and ignorance about the perils of sea travel to Britain when she proclaims: ‘in the future Hindoos who desire to see England will be able to go to and fro between India and that country without fear of offending prejudice, of incurring discomfort, or of being swallowed up by the sea.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 5) Ragaviah dispels the idea that the foreign terrain was replete with danger. She utilises another Orientalist trope, where the fear of the unknown is conquered to establish a foothold in a land of opportunity. She emphasises:

I had great difficulty in resisting the foolish prejudices and fancies that were calculated to cause fear in me by my relations, who urged me to cast off visiting England, but I have realized my wish by going to Europe and seeing European peoples in their native countries, [to which] I must confess that I like the land for the multifarious advantages within the reach of everyone. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 122)

Ragaviah charts her progress on a mock Orientalist’s map, her travels to Europe are for the advantage of her readership, to be both teacher and explorer, and the text definitely suggests that she was writing for an Indian audience. On describing London, she proclaims to ‘give my native readers some little idea of that really wonderful city I shall make a few statements on the subject.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 111) The Orientalist stereotype of the inert and submissive Indian woman,

propagated by British colonial travellers such as Fanny Parkes, is strategically dismantled.

Motifs of the contemporary picturesque travel genre are deliberately employed by Ragaviah in her reception of Britain and its industrialising landscape. A sense of awe and wonderment are expressed as she approaches the urban and imperial metropole:

As we were nearing Waterloo Station we crossed several bridges, and directing my view towards the innumerable turrets and high houses, the whole town seemed to be in a blaze, the cause being attributable to gas-lights with which the streets are lighted, as I afterwards learnt to be the case. We left our train and engaged cabs, drove through several streets, arriving at last at the Haxels Exeter Hotel, in the Strand. The brilliant lights even surpassed a bright moonlight night ... and [I] realized, to a certain extent, the true meaning of the word 'Fairy-land.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 46)

In this exclamation, she reverses textbook Orientalist imagery by eulogising about a journey into a landscape of light, a reversal of the descent into darkness that became synonymous with Orientalists' portrayals of the Orient. Consistently throughout the text, she fulfils the criteria of the curious traveller. On viewing the Crystal Palace she exclaims: 'on all and at each occasion we were there we saw something to admire and something novel.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 65) Furthermore, in describing the London underground, Ragaviah states: 'these trains that run *under* the ground with buildings and roads right above ... [are] a curiosity.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 60)

In making Britain the spectacle, she does not completely disavow the curiosity with which she would have been greeted on the streets of London. Her entry into Britain is recounted initially in unremarkable terms; however, she is conscious of her difference in the midst of the imperial metropolis. She recognises the gaze with which she is greeted when she notes: 'everybody in the yard was very

busy, and those of the pedestrians that were moving about took me for some extraordinary human being, apparently on account of my national “costume.” (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 43) Enthusiasm regarding her exotic disposition is also noted when she comments on the reception she received from influential lady patrons as Lady Waterlow and Mary Carpenter:¹⁴⁵

Some of these [ladies in their welcome,] bring the two races to a close intimacy, in order to understand the real wants and discomforts in the Indian administration, give soirees and evening parties, when all mix freely, and the Indians are introduced to ladies and gentlemen of high rank. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 56-57)

In this statement, Ragaviah makes an investment in the Victorian feminist and reformist agenda in India. However, she displays an awareness of imperial politics, the subtext being that the welcome she receives in Britain is predicated on a commitment to her ability to aid British hegemony in India and not a purely genuine concern for cross-cultural understanding as it would outwardly seem.

Ragaviah is also confronted by a cultural stratification of society that is free of the caste and gender restrictions that segregated social conditions back in India: ‘countless people of both sexes walking up and down [the street] added a fresh impulse to the spectacle.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 121) However, she does not recoil from this apparent assault on Indian social propriety; she actually utilises such a spectacle to make her argument for a more modern society in India where female emancipation would lift the Indian woman out of the confines of the domestic sphere. She firstly compares English liberty with the oppressive social culture in India:

[Women in] England hold a very different position to what they do in India, there they are the equals of the men, and are their best advisers, while in this country ... they are held to be inferior in every respect; and instead of being

advisers, are treated by many as slaves to the will and bidding of the male sex. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 114)

In order for this social dynamic to change, she imbibes the reformist agenda of Victorian feminist discourse that emphasised that change was both necessary, inevitable and to be delineated along the coordinates of Western modernity. Pothum's Anglocentrism is vivid in her desire for India to develop along Western lines; she explicitly professes her faith in the civilising potential of the imperial project: 'the eyes of my countrymen are gradually becoming opened on this subject and it is to be hoped that the future generation will realize the blessing which the pioneers of civilisation have wrought for this sunny and beautiful land India.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 114)

Ragaviah, in appealing for female rights in India, posits the English lady as an icon to be replicated, allowing for a social process to be reconstituted. In doing this she places the Victorian domestic sphere as a model that was applicable to the social reform of India. She professes: 'I believe it is every Indian woman's duty to note the peculiarity of English domestic life when in England, which I have seen personally.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 52) She goes on to eulogise about 'the whole population of females [in Britain that] are educated, and the results and benefits of such education we all know.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 56) The Victorian family unit is praised for its unity and warmth, a tacit suggestion that the domestic sphere in India is not so harmonious in its structure. She marvels at 'the sight at our visitors' homes [which are] very pretty. All the members of the family sit in company in the dining room, freely talking to one another.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 56) Ragaviah's appraisal of Victorian spectacles of domesticity is an effective counter to the idea that Indian women were inert in their reception of

Victorian civilising projects. She displays agency in the way she both perceives and analyses British culture and thus exhibits a travelling and ethnographic subjectivity that has hitherto been denied the Indian female traveller in the era in which she wrote. It also demonstrates that feminist projects in India may have been more dialogical in nature than has historically been accounted for in Orientalist textbooks.

This subjectivity is further displayed in her appreciation of British technology and industrial modernity and respect for the political and economic rubrics with which the Empire had been built. As opposed to Orientalists' accounts of the East and its antiquity, modernity is put under the microscope. Ragaviah's admiration for British technology and invention is a dominant thread that runs through the narrative. In one passage she gazes admiringly at the efficiency of British electricity:

The gas jets are connected with pipes containing the gas, which are either buried or nailed in a wall or under the ground, and in every place where these lights are burnt, a gasometer is provided to test the quality of the gas used, by the authorities, to enable them to tax accordingly. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 78)

Ragaviah emphasises that British hegemony was based not just on superior technology but in essence on a sophisticated and modern political system: 'Englishmen connect themselves with other nations by means of trade, railways and electric telegraphs, and their system of working is based on principles and the thorough understanding of commercial law.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 68)

Trade and technology are coupled as intrinsic to British imperial power:

With their huge machinery in general at Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield and other places, they make a double profit by importing raw materials from India and other countries, turning them out with a better shape and kind and by finding sale in those countries alone. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 68)

In this passage, Ragaviah begins to question the terms and agreements of British rule in India by implicitly locating the inequalities and exploitation of the imperial system. Her grievances are never expressed in blunt terms but are conveyed under a cloak of Anglo-centrism. She expresses admiration for the British trading system but then also calls for such free enterprise to be introduced in India, an economic liberty that was denied to Indian businesses. Ragaviah appeals for British free trade principles to also apply in the colonies themselves: 'if the millowners' grievances in India should be redressed, then, we would fully and confidently hope that Indian mills would abundantly supply our wants on the spot alone, instead of purchasing them through foreign agents.' (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 121)

The travelogue can be viewed as an Anglophilic account of an Indian lady's journey into the heart of the imperial metropole. However, Ragaviah's text does signpost a variety of criticisms of British rule that constitute a reversal of Orientalist practice, where the gaze of social critique is redirected onto the colonial power. In describing the Tower of London, Ragaviah can be seen to allude to the tyrannical and violent arm of imperialism that the discourses of modernity and the civilising project sought to erase in its documentation of Empire:

I was never under the impression that Englishmen were capable of doing such shocking deeds as were done in this tower, and hence I should suppose the English rulers in bygone times were really barbarous in torturing the life of a culprit or a felon under the block and axe. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 76-77)

Within this paradigm, she can be viewed to subtly undercut Orientalist's portrayals of themselves as civilisers. Ragaviah again posits such criticisms in a concessional tone:

I believe that though many wrong and unwise things had been done by the British representatives in this country ... they have been done with no ill will

at heart but through ignorance of the real wants and wishes of the people, and through carelessness, certainly with not any evil or malicious intention. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 147)

However, a subversive tone can be viewed in her observations of Empire; she is not subsumed within a purely concessional paradigm, she offers a vivid critique of British policy and outlines a process for change, be it moderate and gradual.

British policy in India is further critiqued for its haughty and superior approach to governance: ‘the mistake is that English people don’t look upon India as their home, but only as a land of sojourn and the consequence is that they perform their duties in a perfunctory manner.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 48) Ragaviah expands on her criticisms by offering advice on the way colonial governance could be improved:

If they would look upon India as their own home, as a distant part of England, the beautiful land that gave them birth, and would take a greater and more earnest interest in the welfare of the people of this empire, as though they were working for their own kinsmen in England, the many egregious mistakes that are made would not happen. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 147-48)

The gaze of normativity is also reversed onto London, the embodiment of British imperial power and prestige. Firstly, London is mythologised in Orientalist terms, ‘I wish some of my countrymen could see this city called by some the “modern Babylon.” How they would open their eyes with astonishment at its beauties and wonders.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 112) However, beneath the wonder of the modern metropolis, Ragaviah hints at a greed and rapaciousness that drives modern society in the West. On the dual face of modernity she comments:

In London the very best men and the very worst men breathe the same atmosphere. There is astounding wealth and wretched poverty; there is vast wisdom and sunken ignorance; there is the home of all that is good and virtuous, and there is also the lowest depths of repulsive vice and sin. (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 112)

Materialism is emphasised as a Western affliction: ‘all men in that city seem to be striving and unceasingly labouring after money.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 112) Ragaviah’s observations of Britain are largely devoid of an explicit Hindu sensibility; however, she is not afraid to assert her religious difference when she feels that her cultural influences are superior to Western norms, or alternatively, if she feels threatened by certain aspects of modernity prevalent in the Occident.

Ragaviah goes on to overtly criticise Western perceptions of the backwardness and antiquity of the Hindu faith, by explicitly criticising the religious sense of superiority that underpinned much of the missionary projects that were being promoted across India at the time. She pleads that ‘the pure religion of the Hindoo is as acceptable in the eyes of the great creator and preserver as is the Christian, and it is only the uncharitable and the bigoted that assert to the contrary.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 112) A more critical eye is appealed to in the documentation of the Other, where Orientalist pretensions of fact and reality in their portrayal of the Orient need to be re-evaluated. Ragaviah rejects the epistemological straight-jacket in which India had been placed within the lexicon of colonial history, when she chides Western people:

[Who] do not understand the Hindoo religion and its grand fundamental principles, that they call those who profess it “heathen” and “idolaters.” True there are many objectionable forms and absurd ceremonies in it but the religion is per se good in the sight of “the eternal, unchangeable one.” (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 115)

Furthermore, the museological elements of Orientalist constructions are also highlighted in one passage regarding the Indian mutiny of 1857. When visiting the chamber of horrors at Madame Tussards she comments that the ‘illustration is so very exact that I thought I was on the battlefield, and so did not stay long for fear of

swooning.’ (Ragaviah, *Pictures of England*, 68) In raising the spectacle of the mutiny, Ragaviah also consciously refracts her experiences of Britain through her knowledge of the Empire’s history in India.

Ragaviah overtly demonstrates her awareness of the way India was portrayed in the West, but more importantly she hints at the discord in colonial relations that such an event exemplified and how such an event could be manipulated within Orientalist history writing and representations of India in Britain. Her travelogue can be viewed as one of the earliest attempts to adapt and rewrite such Orientalist representations. The following section will place the Indian female writer, Cornelia Sorabji, at the interstices of a variety of overlapping discourses that were central to the functioning of British colonialism in India.

Cornelia Sorabji – The Imperialist Sensibility

Cornelia Sorabji was born into a Parsi family in Bombay in 1866. Her family had converted to Christianity, her father, Sorabji Kharsedji (who later changed his name to the Christian name Richard Sorabji), was a Parsi and her mother was a low caste Hindu who had also converted when she married Sorabji's father. The family in Sorabji's words were 'brought up English ... with English discipline; on the English language ... in a home furnished like an English home.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 12) This familial paradigm presented Sorabji with an avenue into a world that would not have been accessible under a traditional Indian upbringing. Cornelia's mother Francina was a committed social activist who sought to engage in the modernising projects that had been initiated by the variety of Christian missionaries who flourished all over India. Her father was also committed to raising his daughters with good education and for them to aspire for professional careers; expectations that were anathema to the social expectations of Indian women across all communities in India at the time. Sorabji was born into a hybridised family that had already sloughed of the weight off cultural expectations; her father's conversion to Christianity was especially contentious in regards to the minority status of Parses in India. Both parents 'in their different ways represented ... minorities within minorities (Christianised groups within Parsee/tribal groupings): this special if somewhat beleaguered position would inform and reinforce Cornelia's self perceived outside status.' (Introduction, *India Calling*, x) This identity formation was intrinsic to both Sorabji's subsequent attempts to insert herself within the imperial project and the various ways in which she was able to anachronistically adopt, appropriate, reverse and subvert dominant Orientalisms.

Cornelia Sorabji became the first woman graduate in Western India when she obtained a first class degree in English literature from Bombay University. She subsequently secured a job at Gujarat College in Ahmedabad teaching literature. With the aid of a scholarship from her British patrons, Lord and Lady Hobhouse, Sorabji then moved to Somerville College at Oxford University in 1889 to study law and train for the Bar. She moved to England with special dispensation, this was because no woman was allowed to proceed to a degree at Oxford until 1922, even though they were permitted to attend the classes and take the exams. Historically, Sorabji became the first woman in the entire British Empire to pass her Bachelor of Civil Law exam; although, it was not until she returned to Oxford in 1922 that she received her law degree. Subsequently, she was also called to the Bar in the same year. In the interim between these periods, however, she served the Court of Wards in Calcutta as its legal adviser for a period of eighteen years in between 1904 and 1922. Suparna Gooptu, in her excellent biography of Cornelia Sorabji's life, has stated that her professional career during this time was punctuated by 'a continuous struggle to negotiate the multiple layers of power relationships structured on race, class and caste,' where 'her work involved regular office work and extensive district tours under very trying conditions.'¹⁴⁶ This established the structural and thematic basis of her texts, which detailed her extensive periods of travel, whilst also developing a political subjectivity that allowed her to manoeuvre between the various bureaucratic minefields that sought to exploit her minority voice. Her mobile subjectivity enabled Sorabji to navigate between the patriarchies of India as a society and the Empire as a political hierarchy.

Before and after the time she had relocated to Britain, Sorabji produced a variety of interdisciplinary texts that could be described variously as

autobiographies, ethnographies, memoirs and histories. The majority of her literary corpus concentrated on the social welfare and reform of the Zenana inhabitant and Indian women in general, across all communities in India. Her first text, *Love and Life behind the Purdah* was published in 1901, followed three years later by a text actually focused on Indian childhood, *Sun-Babies, Studies in the Child-Life of India* (1904). However, her subsequent texts reoriented her focus back onto Indian women specifically: these included *Portraits of Some Indian Women* (1905) and *Between the Twilights: Being Studies of Indian Women by One of Themselves* (1908). She also composed a profile of Florence Nightingale in *A New Story about Florence Nightingale* in 1910. Six years later she wrote a children's book called *Shikhandi: The Maiden-Knight and Other Stories* (1916) that was illustrated by the Victorian illustrator Warwick Goble. Further literary output in the decade following included the ethnographies *Indian Tales of the Great Ones Among Men, Women, and Bird-People* (1916), *The Purdahdashin* (1917) and *Shubala: a child-mother* (1920).¹⁴⁷

Once she had settled in Britain, Sorabji wrote a succession of books about her time and career spent working for the Court of Wards in India. These also incorporated her legal work and time spent living in Britain, most notably her two autobiographies/travelogues: *India Calling* (1935) and *India Recalled* (1936). A biography of her sister entitled: *Susie Sorabji, Christian-Parsee Educationist of Western India; A Memoir* was also composed in 1932. Two historical narratives: *India: Ancient Heritage* (1934) and *Queen Mary's Book for India* (1943) were published either side of Sorabji's two autobiographies.

Cornelia Sorabji, throughout her writings, positions herself in a variety of contradictory settings, where 'as a citizen of empire, she effectively found herself at

the intersection point of any number of fault-lines in the colonial establishment ... both affiliation and isolation informed her life: her identity was constituted within the tension of their interplay.’ (Introduction, *India Calling* xi) This conflicting sense of affiliation can again be partially attributed to her father’s decision to convert to Christianity whilst continuing to identify himself and his family with his Parsi heritage. A resulting polyvalent sense of identity is expressed in vivid terms when Sorabji declares:

We were made proud of [the Parsi] Community; but from our earliest days we were taught to call ourselves Indian and love and be proud of the country of our adoption: while ... our parents made us love also the people and country to which George Valentine and Cornelia Ford belonged.¹⁴⁸ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 12)

The fact of travel was again instrumental in fashioning this mobile identity as her parents moved from Nasik where she was initially raised, to Belgaum and then on to Poona.¹⁴⁹ Sorabji and her family’s identity constructions are not binary; they chose to position themselves outside of coded definitions within the British imperial body politic. This fluid dynamic allowed her to variously fashion herself as an imperialist but also as an Indian with a developed sense of what that meant as a national identity, hence her affiliation to the colonial project was not always in harmony; tensions and disagreements were readily expressed.

Sorabji’s endorsement of British imperialism can be explained by the analogy she draws between the benefits she perceives the Parsi community had engendered within India and the modernity that British colonialism promised to deliver:

They have, like the British helped the development of trade, and being, as a community, rich prosperous and generous have been responsible for many public benefactions in the cities, where they dwell; giving the lead, indeed, in these directions to native Indians themselves. We have lived in real isolation,

but in real friendship and understanding with all races and communities in India. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 10)

The Parsi contribution to Indian culture and civilisation at the beginning of her autobiography acts as a surrogate emphasis for what she believed the influence the British imperial project had, and could continue to have, over Indian progress and modernity. The benefits and benevolence of the British imperial project are explicitly laid out by Sorabji when relating her own position within the reforming and missionary structure. She proclaims that within reformism: ‘coercion would be useless as well as foolish. And coercion was against the principles and promises of the British.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 133)

Explicitly and at times implicitly, Sorabji co-opts herself into an Orientalist and particularly Anglicist discourse. Her Christian faith was one such affiliation with Western value systems that facilitated her co-option within Victorian discourses of reform. She states: ‘it is my considered belief that India cannot attain to the expression of her highest self ... without the continued example and teaching of the devoted and efficient men and women who throughout the country represent the church of Christ.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 267) Conversely, Sorabji is also quick to tap into the romanticist nostalgia that had characterised much of the early part of the nineteenth century. Her tone and language in this passage are adopted from this discourse: ‘I have a sneaking conviction that the ancients understood the Oriental temperament as modern educationists cannot do, and that India will not enter upon her inheritance till she returns to her second century ways.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 125) India, in order to fulfil its promise, must look to its own ancient history in order to paradoxically extricate itself from the past. Thus, Sorabji proves dextrous in her miming of various Orientalist positions. In this respect, she aligns herself with her

European readership, adopting ‘the all seeing eye of the imperialist, playing to the scopophilia, disguised as reforming interest, of her Western audience.’ (Introduction, Sorabji, *India Calling*, 125) Sorabji consistently places herself within the exalted place of the Orientalist whose job was to sanitise and restructure its subject, a position she wilfully adopts, especially in the way the zenana is positioned as the site of her reforming agenda.

In framing the zenana as an antiquated site, she metaphorically acts as the figure of modernity steadfastly sure of her power to transform and puncture Indian beliefs in idols and black magic. She stresses the potential commensurability of Indian belief systems and Western modernity when she exhorts: ‘if one only knows enough there is a way of getting round most of the centuries-old difficulties.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 152) Her ability to overcome these differences is reiterated when she precociously anoints herself as the bringer of enlightenment:

After years of experience, in untrodden ways, I conclude that the only way to help the illiterate and superstitious is to proceed from the known and accepted to the unknown; to base the enlightenment which you would bring upon the superstition; not to flout the superstition. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 153)

Cornelia Sorabji consciously places herself within the epistemological framework of the classic Orientalist, an administrator convinced of the importance of their work, who figured as a pioneer and writer of history: ‘I had in short, learnt that the work which I had prescribed for myself met a real need: that it was worthwhile and satisfying, and should be carried on after my time.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 79) To do this, she makes a promise to her readership to become intimate with and subsequently render intelligible her subject: ‘I had realized from the beginning that I

could never understand my wards, unless I understood their attitude of mind towards religion; and I had not before.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 85)

As opposed to the more opaque relation to the domestic in *India Calling* the reader in *India Recalled* published in 1936 is ‘pointedly informed that the zenana is directly analogous to, and synonymous with, the orthodox Hindu home – a symbolic and material space in need of attention precisely because it is in crisis.’¹⁵⁰ The zenana in Orientalist terms becomes the mythologised terrain that needs to be accessed, conquered and then controlled and Sorabji forwards herself as the imperial conqueror.

The figures of the Indian woman and ancient India become intertwined when Sorabji profiles Girish Babu, an elderly woman who proved immune to her rhetoric of modernity. She concedes that: ‘the centuries of looking at life from a different angle, had fixed her pupils, so to speak, and they could not expand or contract to suit the luminosity of the West – of other latitudes of thought and light.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 100) However, Sorabji postulates Babu and others like her, who act as metaphors for the zenana as a whole, as the final obstacles in the way of modernity and its spread over Indian society. Sorabji identifies ‘the urge of the young, for Western contacts, [that] had already in [Babu’s and] Arnakali’s lifetime, knocked at the Zenana door.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, viii)

Sorabji explicitly Orientalises the zenana in formulaic Orientalist terms, by portraying it as ancient, unchanging, and fundamentally anti-modern:

Those of us who know only the modern progressive India of the things that are visible, are apt not to realize – maybe we have had no opportunity to discover – the fact that that historical anecdote [the Zenana] is symbolic of orthodox Hindu India in this twentieth century; that it breathes the atmosphere, and describes the foundations of the life lived in every orthodox

Hindu home ... tied and bound by traditions – spiritual, tribal, dynastic, domestic. (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, vii)

Modernity is fixed as inevitable and Indian society is placed upon Western teleologies of progress. Sorabji concedes the need to ‘prepare our children for that open zenana door, for that speeding – up of the pace, which cannot be evaded.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, vii) Antoinette Burton has emphasised the ‘museological character’ of her memoirs, insofar as they reflect ‘Sorabji's commitment to understanding the zenana and its inhabitants as relics of the past and herself, by extension, as the representative not simply of a contradictory but of an unwilling modernity as well.’ (Burton, ‘*The Purdahnashin*,’ 156) Her co-option within the colonial project is at its most explicit here; she can be viewed as a genuine Orientalist in Saidian terms as she constructs India and its domestic sphere as incapable of reforming themselves in accordance to these teleologies of modernity; India needs and unconsciously desires her intervention as the purveyor of modernity.

Though her imperial sensibilities and Anglophilia are undeniable, her Orientalist gaze is not merely mimetic of Victorian Anglicist discourse; she is allowed more intimate access to the zenana, a domestic entrance not readily available to Western reformers, male or female. Thus her accounts of Indian domesticity are promoted as pioneering, intimate and rendered with an objectivity and sympathy that she contends a conventional Orientalist account just could not achieve or aspire to. In one encounter in the zenana, she emphasises her ability to penetrate the Indian social curtain, proclaiming: ‘to my delight, I was invited inside the circle to bestow my blessing: and was able to pull aside the flower – veils a little, to find two very happy and beaming faces.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 220) Behind the purdah we find an objectified sphere ‘in contrast to most zenana narratives that

alternate between horror at the abjection of the zenana women or a voyeuristic pleasure in their purported exoticism – the actual visit to the zenana is always held up as a much-awaited occasion.¹⁵¹ Sorabji recontextualises the Orientalist paradigm here; her influence and input as an Indian woman is invited; a surrogate emphasis that the British imperial project was not so eagerly welcomed.

The framings of the Other, especially the mythologised Indian woman of the zenana and the harem, are rendered with more detail. Her ethnography is imbued with a desire to subvert a variety of dominant Orientalist stereotypes. The perceived helplessness and powerlessness of the zenana inhabitant in comparison to the freedom of Western women is questioned by Sorabji when she explains that ‘the Indian woman has, generally speaking, greater rights to property than the English married woman ... and far less hazard and insecurity in widowhood.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 32) She goes on to caution against the generalisations by which Indian women were encased within the epistemological framework of feminine Orientalist constructions. Sorabji warns that we should ‘dare not lightly dismiss the thrills or shudders of any single person with inhibitions and raised in circumstances to which we ourselves are strangers.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 264) This exhortation demonstrates a crucial paradox in Sorabji’s thinking, she calls for universal understanding within a globalised framework but also contrarily pleads for localised sensitivities when accessing and reforming particular Indian traditions and customs, most notably the domesticated zenana inhabitant. Mrinalini Sinha, in her efforts to place the modern Indian woman outside of Western feminist history, reiterates Sorabji’s point of view:

This reconceptualisation of historiography not only emphasizes the need to historicize the conditions in which politics and identities emerge, but also

draws attention to the writing of history itself ... open[ing] up new possibilities for conceptualizing the problem of locating the Indian woman.¹⁵²

Sorabji's reverse Orientalist account of the native woman is one such possibility.

It is important to note, however, that Sorabji's reverse Orientalism is tactical; she is not positioned as an ideological anti-Orientalist, who fully objects to the colonial project, its political machinations and the binary distinctions it makes between East and West. What she does do, is balance her admiration for aspects of British colonialism, with a desire to protect Indian cultural values, because, she believes that successful social change needs to be co-ordinated in gradual and contextually sensitive terms. In her view, an absolute and dogmatic approach to social change, represented by Anglicist Orientalism, can only result in native resistance and social re-entrenchment in India.

Sorabji delineates the zenana outside a series of Orientalist taxonomies. The zenana is not stripped of vibrancy, tenderness and life; she is careful to humanise the domestic terrain. In one description she joyously recalls: 'now all was laughter and movement. Indian women are really very witty; and for once the children could speak freely in the presence of their elders ... teasing them, calling them by nicknames [they] carefully concealed.' (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 264) The lifeless and docile zenana inhabitant is reproduced as wilful, exuberant and inquisitive. When describing one such zenana resident, Giribala Devi, Sorabji stresses that 'she spoke readily enough, and was really very bright and amusing – a vivid personality, conscious of individual gifts, and longing for expression.' (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 20) Some of the Ranis in both *India Calling* and *India Recalled* are showcased as strong independent women whose free thinking and rationality were beginning to erode the influence of the priesthood and superstition in the domestic sphere:

I have known women who have founded hospitals and schools, boldly facing the wrath of the priests who had hoped expenditure might be on “gifts to the priesthood” or “to buy off the curses of (unknown) enemies.” And, I am full of hope for all that will be done for the country when secluded women are educated and guided along the right lines. (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 40)

This dynamic lays bare the promise of a new India if channelled correctly. The stereotypes of the docile, weak, unchanging and uneducated Indian woman are playfully employed and then effectively undercut.

In one passage the Hindu woman is actually delineated as potentially nourishing for Western modernity and culture. On the religiosity of Hindu women Sorabji lauds ‘the Hindu woman [who] has a great deal to teach the modern world about the undaunted practice of religion.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 100) Prithvi Maharani is one such character who is offered as a successful example of a strong independent woman who combined the religiosity demanded of her by social custom and the modern and progressive faculties demanded of her within the British imperial body politic and the globalising world as a whole. The two elements are not presented as mutually exclusive by Sorabji in contrast to classic Orientalist strictures. Sorabji explains that Prithvi, was ‘fierce also the while, in the practice of orthodox Hinduism, giving the priests no handle.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 129) Prithvi explicitly assumes control of her own estate where she ‘demanded to examine ... [her] accounts ... [and] criticized government methods – al[beit] discreetly from behind the Purdah, ... [where she] initiated that management be given into her own hands ... She was literate ... and capable.’ (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 129) The Oriental woman then is taken out of the epistemological straightjacket of Orientalist Zenana constructions, and she is active in this extrication, not inert; she becomes active in the writing of her narrative move towards modernity.

When Sorabji's imperialist sensibility is placed under the microscope, we are able to see a dynamics of imperial affiliation that was far from rigid; her reverence for British values is tempered by her respect for local Indian customs and rituals. She is sensitive in her portrayal of the zenana inhabitants even in her attempts to change and reform them. Sukanya Banerjee has called this dynamic in Sorabji's corpus as an invocation of the 'pre-modern in the name of the modern ... highlighting her presence in the zenana but only through abstraction; situating herself in nation and empire yet not being marked by it, Sorabji presents herself as irrevocably liminal.' (Banerjee, 'Empire, Nation, and the Professional Citizen,' 310) Sorabji is not two dimensional in her criticisms or her praise; she strives to create a universal sense of understanding as opposed to applying a perceived universal value system that would render such attempts impossible. This relativist dynamic in her thinking is expressed lucidly when she writes: 'to refuse to acknowledge the claims of customs and religion would have been madness. It would have been sheer waste. It would not have convinced the women of the cruelty of infant marriage; it would not have prevented it.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 133) In her call for cultural relativity, we can see the scope for Sorabji's work to be viewed as subversive, a reading that separates her from being encased with an imperial mindset that purely regurgitated the dominant stereotypes of Orientalism. Sorabji reverses the power dialogism of colonial representation as she becomes the more potent Orientalist, with exclusive access, acceptance and trust in the zenana, an ethnographic validity the conventional Orientalist (female or male) just could not obtain. The following section will locate Sorabji as a travel writer and Orientalist adventurer, who intrepidly travelled within Britain and India.

The Intrepid Female Traveller

Cornelia Sorabji poses an interesting distinction between herself and the writers documented in the first chapter; she travelled and accounted for her travels within both Britain and India. Both her autobiographies *India Calling*, and *India Recalled*, can be viewed as travelogues even if she does not self-consciously position them as such. They explicitly chart her movements through the imperial world in a series of vignettes and episodes. Her travels within India especially can be viewed as overt attempts to reform Indian customs and traditions; she consciously positions the European reader as her audience. However, her writings were also published in India where they sought to engage in a variety of discourses that were raging at the time, namely: nationalism, female rights and modern legislation and colonial administration. Antoinette Burton has argued that the interdisciplinary strain that runs throughout Sorabji's work, in both form and content, was deliberate as 'Sorabji's authority as a reliable archivist/ethnographer/tourist depended precisely on this blurring of the genres.' (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 84) Moreover, when viewed as a travel writer, Sorabji can straddle all these disciplines, as each element of her work feeds into the other. Sorabji's legal work as a social guardian depended on her travel, which enabled her to travel through great swathes of the Indian landscape which allowed her access into both the domestic sphere and the colonial administration. A dual access which enabled her to offer ethnographic accounts of Indian society that were out of reach for the conventional Orientalist travel writer, both male and female.

In positioning Sorabji as a travel writer, one has to first look at her travels within India, in which she consciously appropriates the voice of the intrepid and

curious Orientalist traveller. In *India Calling* she imbues within her travels a sense of wonderment and curiosity, as if she is taken on a trip through the mystical: 'I don't know that I resented being kept awake, for the stretches of jungle growth through which we passed were thriddled with beauty and mystery, and seemed altogether unreal.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 147) Sorabji expresses herself in formulaic terms within the lexicon of Orientalism when she proclaims that: 'I might have been living in the pages of a coloured picture book of Ancient India.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 41) The narrative voice expresses an Orientalist sensibility in the way it delineates her journey as an expedition into the past which is consciously positioned as scholarly, where 'nothing could mar the joy one had in the work itself; the opportunity of studying the real people of India in their setting; the opportunities of travelling off the beaten track.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 117) In this assertion, she illustrates her desire to be viewed in objective terms; she places herself outside the subject of her study, the 'real India' that she wishes to seek out, write and explain.

Moreover, within this exclamation to travel off the 'beaten track' is the conviction that her account is a fresh perspective that is being fostered and not purely a reworking of prior journeys. She desires validation in the efficacy of her ethnographic accounts. To do this, she posits herself in classic Orientalist terms where she also variously stresses the danger and hardships that she has to endure in her treks through the potentially threatening Indian environment: 'in the unsophisticated water-routes of Eastern Bengal I have tried vainly to capture sleep.' (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 147) However, crucially, like the intrepid Orientalist, she demonstrates a bravery that renders defunct any element of danger. In expressing this fearlessness, she writes of an episode where 'the crocodiles pointed out to me casually by a waterman who had got so *blasé* over them that he had light-heartedly

sent my *chuprassis* to wade across their path.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 147) She registers no fear or reservation about the dangers in her path.

Sorabji also explicitly exoticises the Indian landscape and environment in her travels, a tactic that would have appealed to the curiosities of the British reader. In one section, describing village India, she writes:

If you are on a river steamer, a river flood is a glorious sight, viewed from the safely moving point of observation ... there is something exhilarating in seeing the uprooted trees, the rafts of thatch or broken walls of matting, riding the river stream. (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 172)

Implicit within the imagery here is the idea that her Orientalist gaze is stable and reliable as well as awed and inquisitive. Another Orientalist trope that she employs is the sense of venturing into the past, accessing a bygone and exotic history. In one passage, she stresses to the reader that:

I travelled primitively, in an ancient carrying chair. The chair was of wood painted emerald green and decorated with the history of ancient kings ... [I was] furious at delays of this kind, fretting to get on to my objective. But in my “picture” changing-chair I felt otherwise. (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 136)

This passage illustrates a variety of appropriated tropes in Sorabji’s travel narrative; her venture into history is portrayed as becalming and nourishing; moreover, it also underlines her co-option within the romanticist discourse of India’s glorious and regal past.

Change is also visualised in her travels, the clash between the pre-modern and the modern is juxtaposed along her route. Indian society is contradictorily portrayed as evolving and static:

This save for the cars – was immemorial India. Great Britain came in, in the scouts and the guides’ tents, the Red Cross stations, the booths of Christian missionaries, imitated by the Rama Krishna, Sanatan Dharma, and Vedantic missions who had erected not only bookshops, meeting houses and clubs, but

chemist's shops and dressing stations, adjoining a small field hospital. (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 195)

Within this exclamation, Sorabji is seemingly loath to reject the idea that India can be completely modernised whilst cataloguing the various ways in which this engagement with modernity was altering the Indian landscape. In this respect, her Orientalist co-option cannot be completely fulfilled; she sees the value in modernising projects but does not have the absolute faith in their ultimate success. This sense of the depth and durability of Indian tradition is conveyed when Sorabji directly addresses the reader: 'I have set down some of the customs and ceremonies which I have seen holding their own in India through the last fifty years. They are still to be found firmly entrenched in parts of the country.' (Sorabji, *India Recalled*, 246) Sorabji's travelling subjectivity in regards to India, is as mobile as her physical movements; she chooses to affirm the transformational aspirations of modernity but couples this with a reluctance to fully endorse the efficacy of such projects. This engenders an Orientalist sensibility that does not fully accord with dominant Orientalist portrayals of India within the framework of contemporary Western travel writing.

Sorabji's reversal of dominant Orientalisms is far more pronounced when one analyses her travels within Britain. She spent much of her education at Oxford and in later life was actually based in Britain although she continued to flit to and from India. The hybridity of her upbringing is mirrored explicitly in this constant flux between what was ostensibly the Orient and the Occident. This sense of spatial flux became intrinsic to the character and subjectivity she liked to project. Sorabji consciously highlights this dynamic within her work when she notes: 'in 1894 I returned to India for the first time. The to-and-fro-ings since are more than I can

remember: and there are many continental visits – Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, Austria.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 37) Cornelia Sorabji expands on this travelling subjectivity by stating that she was indeed a hybrid imperial subject. This stake is claimed most vividly in an address to a conference on Anglo-Indian relations in 1908:

If to feel in one’s pulse the great axioms of two continents, if to love two different worlds as different as East is from West, to vibrate with one set of susceptibilities to the griefs and joys, the folk tales and literatures of both, be a privilege, then indeed I am blessed and privileged among women.¹⁵³

Sorabji strives throughout her corpus of work and public voice to stress not only a travelling and mobile subjectivity but an international and global outlook that was validated by her ability to travel throughout the Empire and beyond. With this formulation, I would like to expand on Inderpal Grewal’s idea that travel for women within the Empire represented freedom, where ‘travel became synonymous with political freedom ... though this freedom was only that of becoming a version of the imperial Englishman.’ (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 79) Sorabji complicates this idiom by showcasing how the native woman could also assume the guise variously of both the colonial female and male subject in her access to travelling mobility. Bannerjee has correlatively argued that ‘the idealization of an idiom of mobility was in itself not unusual, the genre of travel writing having emerged by the early twentieth century as a marker of what Sidonie Smith describes as an “enabling independence” for bourgeois women.’ (Bannerjee, ‘Empire, Nation, and the Professional Citizen,’ 302) Thus, the very act of travel for an Indian woman can be viewed as challenging the dominant structures of Orientalism and the imperial project in its construction of the Indian female subject.

Pallavi Rastogi has praised Sorabji for the subversive fabric of her work where the very absorption of a cosmopolitan identity allowed her to construct a fluid identity from which a multivalent subjectivity could challenge the cultural hegemony of British imperialism:

Hegemony is challenged through a resistance to the normative demands of metropolitan society: a resistance accomplished by the multiplicity of allegiances generated by the act of travel, [where] the cosmopolitanism of ethnicity is a hybrid and plural way of reading the host culture from the perspective of its many peripheries, thereby undermining its impulse toward hegemony and homogeneity.¹⁵⁴

Sorabji's political disposition has been historically positioned as overtly Anglocentric but I would argue that such a conception conflates her admiration for British modernity and culture with a negation of her Indian heritage. I would stress that both positions cannot account for the complexity of her cultural sympathies and malleability of her critical disposition, which could also be fixed onto Britain. Antoinette Burton has stressed that Sorabji's Anglo-centrism was tactical, as an 'identification with "Englishness" functioned as a socially sanctioned means of becoming a citizen for Sorabji, albeit an imperial one.' (Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 115) Thus, Sorabji can be read as a highly discernible colonial citizen that could co-opt herself into a variety of discourses that allowed her to travel seamlessly through the imperial body politic.

One of the ways this social dexterity was put to the test was the successful way in which she navigated between and through the varying motivations of her sponsors that patronised her stay in Oxford and beyond. Burton has expanded this idea by arguing that 'Sorabji's letters from Oxford, written to her parents in Poona between 1889 and 1894, offer a critical reading of middle and upper middle class Victorian culture.' (Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 114) The sense of curiosity

and awe is reversed and turned back onto the imperial metropole. She rhetorically questions in one passage: ‘is there anywhere in the world a river like the Thames, with its sloping banks and its lovely homes and gardens?’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 27) For Sorabji, the metropole becomes the site of potential regeneration:

Oxford is to me the place in which to get ready for life; not unless your work lies there, in which to live it. But Oxford had and has its very own niche in one’s being – the river, the towers, the meadows, college gardens, ghostly Long Wall Street. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 25)

Rastogi argues that Sorabji’s counter narrative decentres Orientalist constructions of reality ‘by turning the colonizer into an ethnographic object, [where] the cosmopolitanism of ethnicity alters Eurocentric modes of representation that depicted the colonized as passive object and the colonizer as anthropological agent.’ (Rastogi, ‘The World Around and the World Afar,’ 739)

Cornelia Sorabji also strives to historicise the presence of Indian women in the metropole, a cultural dynamic that has been elided in a succession of history books about pre-war Britain. When writing *India Calling* in 1934 she states:

In these days when hundreds of Indian Women of all races visit England and the Continent so frequently, a scene like this is hard to visualise. My sisters had preceded me to England ... Indian boys and men had long been coming in respectable numbers. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 36-37)

In one specific passage, she highlights the cultural exchange that renders her as foreign and alien within British society: ‘dear old ladies were always trying to convert me - for instance – the heathen at their gates. And they would talk to one very loudly in pidgin-English ... only once did I try to undeceive a proselytising old lady.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 37) These exchanges highlight Sorabji’s cultural performance, one that had to negotiate the gaze of normativity. The last assertion however, demonstrates clearly her unwillingness to be totally subsumed within

colonial domains of representation. She assumes control of the image she projects and rebuffs Victorian attempts to both completely exoticise or anglicise her.

This element in her thinking is perhaps best illustrated in the way she wilfully protected her sartorial identity and integrity. In counterposing Indian men from Indian women, Sorabji notes that ‘their clothes had not the same allure or suggestion of foreignness.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 37) Her investment in the symbolic element of dress highlights how she was conscious of the way she could be ‘Othered’ within metropolitan culture. Subversively she explicitly rejected English dress and chose to wear a variety of increasingly extravagant Indian saris. Within Victorian Oxford, especially, these sartorial convictions demonstrated an attempt to place the foreign and different at the heart of Victorian culture. British cultural normativity is defied by ‘the self-conscious parading of Indian dress [which] replaces the dullness and drabness of Victorian fashion with the flamboyance of the saree. Sorabji’s cosmopolitan investment in Indian dress ... paves the way for engineering a plurality of fashion.’ (Rastogi, ‘The World Around and the World Afar,’ 746) I would expand on Rastogi’s idea here by viewing her conception in a broader and metaphorical sense where this dynamic indicates the presence of a plurality within Victorian culture, a social conception completely at odds with the binary structures of Orientalism. This cosmopolitanism of ethnicity in Sorabji’s work and the way she presented herself within Britain acts as a dynamic that marks her as a fundamentally hybrid and, by implication, modern subject and writer who would not be out of place in our own post-colonial world.

Sorabji as Feminist

Cornelia Sorabji was born into a deeply patriarchal system where discourses regarding the civility, morality and legality of Indian social customs such as sati, polygamy and purdah were only just beginning to be questioned and analysed within Western modes of interpretation and judgment. Being born into a hybridised family network that took its roots from various parts of India, and the fact that she was able to travel and study within Britain, allowed Sorabji unique access into the interstitial discursive sites in which these various discourses collided and overlapped. Her various aspirations and opportunities within the imperial framework were still indelibly shaped by her position as a woman, and to be a subaltern woman meant that she was doubly oppressed within the social structures of nineteenth century India and Victorian Britain. The following section will seek to place Sorabji within the discourses of both Indian and British feminism, not as a peripheral cultural agent but as an active contributor at the heart of these discourses that have been historically viewed as unilaterally dogmatic. This indicates a dialogical process removed from the historical construction where the civilised Western feminist viewed her subaltern sister in pitying terms, a figure that needed to be extrapolated from the social structure that imprisoned her. By implication, I would argue that this constructed a classic Orientalist's paradigm where the Oriental needed to be saved from themselves. Sorabji highlights a complex feminine sensibility that contested mythologised sites such as the zenana and the harem both along and against dominant modes of thought, and thus placed the Indian female body (her own) in a position of power that questions hegemonic assumptions of Indian female inertia in the discourses of Victorian feminism.

Mirroring Orientalist discourses, Sorabji was adept at co-opting herself within the presumed positions of power and dominance. To do this, she had to negotiate herself a place within the patriarchies of two great social systems, Victorian Britain and traditional India: 'she sought colonial male authority, often represented by what she called England-returned, Indian men. This was the resistance she offered to the social order of her time, without overt manifestation of either a nationalist or feminist temper.' (Bharucha, 'Recalling Cornelia Sorabji,' 145) Her representations of the zenana and herself in general were carefully considered in order to project a strong and a positivist scientific subjectivity that she believed justified her position as a chronicler and ethnographer of the Indian female interior space and body. Sukanya Bannerjee has argued that she 'construct[ed] a narrative self that [was] not specifically gendered, even though ... [she] was allowed to enter the zenana because she was a woman.' (Bannerjee, "Empire, Nation, and the Professional Citizen," 304) I would contest that Sorabji was far more mobile in her gender constructions than just portraying herself as an amorphous figure. She also selectively positioned herself as a modern woman who could gauge the progress of the zenana inhabitant and also as an Indian woman who could access and empathise with the Indian female psyche in a way the Western feminist or male Orientalist could not.

Sorabji spent much of her legal career entwined within cases of women who were the polar opposite of the position she sought for herself as a new modern Indian female. This implicit distancing from her subject is illustrated in the text when she proclaims: 'all orthodox Hindu widows [and women] are not incapable of turning modern learning or usage to their own advantage and the advantage of their properties despite a tragic difficulty of contact with the outer world.' (Sorabji, *India*

Recalled, ix) Paradoxically, framing herself as a ‘new’ woman rested upon a distinction with what was deemed old, traditional and emasculated. Sorabji’s:

“New Woman” was dependent on the figure of the “old fashioned” zenana inhabitant - and how reliant it was in turn on a kind of a gendered imperial historicity: one that plots the woman of the present (and the future) on the grid of the woman of the past. (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 79)

This intimate investment in specifically female interior spaces places Sorabji as a feminist, but she cannot be pigeonholed within Western conventions of the term. Instead of rejecting the masculine, her subjectivity actively sought to align and appropriate itself within the enabling potentialities of that voice, exactly in order to present herself as an authenticated and professional citizen; terms outside of the epistemological framework of the zenana and the harem. Burton has argued that:

In her determination to excavate what was pure and precious about “traditional” femininities, she constantly revealed her deep investment in being seen as the discerning professional woman – an identity that was clearly aligned with the secular, the modern and the masculine. (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 98)

This is illustrated in the way she constructs the zenana as a museum to be viewed, her contribution is consistently positioned as detached, scientific and objective. Sorabji becomes the female liberator but only in accordance with the rules she sets down. Moreover, she also portrays the zenana as a site that is potentially threatening, where things are not always what they seem. In her attempts to educate about infant marriage she states that ‘they could have outwitted us. Even we could not police the zenana.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 133) Foucault, in his analysis of power, has stated that all ‘modes of domination, submission, and subjugation are ultimately reduced to an effect of obedience.’ (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 85) In this passage Sorabji highlights the potential of the Indian female sphere to subvert such mechanisms of power, even whilst figuring as an instrument of that power. Within

this idiom Sorabji aligns herself with the technologies of power of the imperial state; however, I would argue that she also paradoxically questions some of the methods and general prospects of such a mission if conducted along Western and patriarchal conventions.

Sorabji actually constructs a model of progress that contradicts both the Orientalist and (Western) feminist position but also the nationalist position within India as well. This indicates the complexity of her ideologies; they were subject to competing allegiances, and she was never wholly subsumed within a particular discourse. As a consequence, she assumes the place of the genuine creator who was constructing the models on which progress could be measured and achieved. An example of this is illustrated when Sorabji pronounces:

I claim for my countrywomen no whit less, eventually ... than women enjoy in England; but after all, our chief right is to reality; to work, and to the necessary equipment for work in terms of the needs and ignorances and sensibilities of our own so different country. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 157)

Sorabji broadens her position by attacking the universalist pretensions of contemporary Western feminism, she counters that ‘when feminists of the West are deceived by the labels of [achievement] into urging wider enfranchisement and a greater power without regard to local condition and circumstance, the result is like to be worse than stagnation.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 157) Joan Wallach Scott, however, is one such Western feminist in her study on gender and history who forwards a correlative invocation by stressing the need for scholars to ‘examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to a range of activities, social organisations and historically specific cultural representations.’¹⁵⁵ The paradigm Sorabji offers is one of gradual progress, a

delineation that places the zenana on a chart of development constructed by the Indian female herself, within that particular cultural frame of reference.

However, this conception is problematised by her antipathy towards the nationalist movement and radicalisation of females within that wider political ideology. Within this paradigm, Sorabji marks out her position as inherently practical; she argued that modernising projects needed to be coordinated in accordance with the *realpolitik* on the ground in India. She criticises ‘women picketers [who] did the most harm to the country, because they set back the clock of progress in the orthodox and conservative regions where progress was vital, and where the move forward had just begun.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 170) Thus, the feminist sensibility Sorabji constructs is distinct from its Western counterparts as it differentiated between the different levels of development within India, an acknowledgement that social reforms needed to be polyvalent and sensitive to their relative localities. Sorabji broadens her attack on the Western educated nationalist movement (the *swarajists*) when she actually posits them as the perverters of history:

[The] new educators were not content with perversion of history ... boys belonging to other illiterate and orthodox Hindu families were given poisonous and misleading literature in the vernacular, which they were commanded to take home and read to their mothers. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 170)

This is problematic to Sorabji’s projection of herself as educator and communicator of the female domestic sphere, and also consequently, my positioning of her as an Indian feminist within a Western tradition. She constructs a narrative voice that dichotomously disavows the modernising project of nationalism and Victorian feminism. Sorabji does this in order to protect her own highly particularised elite feminism that was framed outside many of the tenets the

nationalist movement inculcated and promoted, namely its anti-colonialist, radical and universalist ethos. Furthermore, it is also complicates her place within a British feminist tradition, because, she believed that the goal of female social enfranchisement in India, could only be realised in accordance with local cultural values and traditions. This concessional approach inevitably required a feminist co-operation with Indian patriarchies, which lessened its radicalism, and also distanced it from the political aspirations of Victorian feminism, and its operations within Britain. In an article called 'Stray thoughts of an Indian Girl,' first published in October 1891, Sorabji proclaims: 'the mistake generally made in theorising about India is to imagine that remedies applicable to one country will suit another' and this was 'particularly so with India, where the circumstances and needs to be met are so absolutely unique, and so entirely different for example, from those that arise in England.'¹⁵⁶ Thus, we can also view Sorabji in radical terms; she belies her imperialist sensibilities in order to offer a modernising project that does not accord with European epistemological and ontological frameworks. She conceives a teleology of development that reverses the Orientalist's conviction that the West knew best, a dynamic that decentres the Occident from being at the core of world history and places it at the periphery. A correlative sidelining of patriarchal voices within the nationalist movement is also engendered in order to protect her status as legislator and disciplining eye of the Indian domestic sphere.

Antoinette Burton in her appraisal of Sorabji has also located a dual tension at the heart of both her literary work and politics:

Sorabji's writings do double duty, first by archiving the disappearing zenana as a site of political contest ... second by offering us the basis for a complex, multistranded historical account of how complex a figure in and of colonial

modernity “the Indian woman” – both the zenana inhabitant and Sorabji herself could be. (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 15)

I would expand on Burton’s argument here by stressing that Sorabji’s complexity extended to her offering a critique of British feminisms and cultural assumptions of superiority:

It is loosely said that Hindu women have no rights to property. This is not correct. Hindu women have absolute rights in the property known as *stridhan*, i.e. property which descends in the female line, and is secure from the manipulation of males. (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 170)

British female liberties are actually compared to their Indian counterparts, when she provocatively states ‘till the English married Women’s Property Act ... Hindu women might be said to have had the greater rights than English married women. Incidentally, the difficulty was, and still is, in getting into touch with those rights.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 170) Western feminism’s perceived status of greater liberty is undercut here; she ends the passage by reversing the gaze of normativity back onto the imperial centre by questioning its claims to female equality in legislation and application. Within this dynamic, we can see the possibilities of placing Sorabji within a global and British tradition of feminism as well as within an Indian context. The call for cross-cultural solidarity between women especially should still command the attention of modern scholars, especially feminist historians and cultural critics. (Introduction, *India Calling* xv)

Cornelia Sorabji cannot be labelled as a feminist in a conventional sense but she contributed to the construction of feminisms in India and Britain: she was the first Indian woman to study for the Bar, her academic and legal achievements in Britain and India proved the capability of Indian women to break the structure of female disenfranchisement within India but also the patriarchal structure of Victorian and early twentieth century Britain. Thus, she offered up a reversal and contradiction

to Orientalist constructions of the Indian woman as inert, idle and ignorant. Her childlessness and asexuality also explicitly countered classic Orientalist constructions of the libidinous and promiscuous Oriental woman. Sorabji was also a pioneer in that she was the first woman of any ethnicity to take the Bar examination in England, although she was not the first to gain qualification. Ivy Williams and Helena Normanton were the first to actually qualify and practice.

This intermingling of British and Indian feminisms is no better illustrated than when she proclaims: ‘my one consolation is that, the Bar being now open to women, the situation in regard to available advice for the help of secluded Indian women generally, is not as hopeless as when I set out on my crusade.’ (Sorabji, *India Calling*, 118) This opens a discursive space for Indian women to be placed at the heart of Victorian and early twentieth century feminist discourses within Britain, not only as barometers to be gauged against or subjects to be saved but active contributors to debates that are still being wrestled with in our ‘postmodern’ and still largely patriarchal age. In the following analysis, I will be investigating Janaki Majumdar’s *Family History* (1935) and its foregrounding of the domestic space in the public sphere.

Family History and the Domestic Archive

Family History by Janaki Majumdar (1886-1963), published in 2003, has only recently been recovered from obscurity by the feminist historian Antoinette Burton who both located and edited the text. The typescript of the original text has been dated by Burton as being written in 1935. It represents an invaluable opportunity to look at the way Indian women both viewed and constituted modernity at the interstices between entities such as Britain/India, colonialism/nationalism and the public/private sphere. The impulse to write the domestic tract was the desire to transcend and also comprehend the transnational nature of her family network. The narrative of the text veers back and forth from India to Britain and the text was eventually unearthed in Philadelphia in the United States.¹⁵⁷ All of this showcases Majumdar's desire to leave an alternative trace of her diasporic experiences. The writing of the family archive was never intended for publication; in fact it was conceived and written most probably for her own family's consumption in the generations following her own. Her elucidation of the domestic life that was intrinsic to the public 'lives' of nationalist figures such as W.C. Bonnerjee presents an alternative discourse to dominant constructions of history, that happened to be orchestrated in the grand theatres of nationalism, patriarchy and colonialism. Majumdar's *Family History* is a domestic treatise that catalogues the domestic life of both herself and Hemangini, her mother who emerges as the true heroine of the text: a rhetorical manoeuvre that privileges the private over the public, the interior over the outside and the feminine over the patriarchal. I would like to place the text alongside the feminist theoretical shift that views the domestic sphere as 'a site of struggle rather than of resolution.' (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 7)

Majumdar was the daughter of one of the most celebrated nationalist leaders of India, W.C Bonnerjee (1844-1906), who was the first president of the Indian National Congress. He was also a barrister who, after winning a scholarship for legal training in England, was called to the Bar in June 1864, after which he returned to Calcutta where he acted as a barrister to the Calcutta high court.¹⁵⁸ Janaki's mother Hemangini was born in 1849; her father, who was five years older, was a wealthy Brahmin who owned significant amounts of land. Hemangini was betrothed to Bonnerjee in 1859 when she was just ten years old. Born and raised a Hindu, she was eventually to convert to Christianity against her husband's wishes once she had settled in Britain. Janaki Majumdar, Hemangini and Bonnerjee's daughter, was born in Calcutta in 1886 but moved to Britain for a Western education two years later where she settled with her mother and siblings. Her father, who was the primary force behind their migration to Britain, stayed in India but visited regularly for his holidays.¹⁵⁹ They subsequently purchased a house and settled in Croydon, South London. Janaki was first educated at the Croydon High School for Girls and then went to study at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1904, where she studied natural science, chemistry, zoology and physiology. Once she had married P.M. Majumdar in November 1909, Janaki settled with him in Calcutta and from there they subsequently moved to Darjeeling. She continued to visit Britain for most of her life and eventually settled there after her husband's death in 1947.

The text does something particularly subversive in regards to both nationalism and colonialism; it treats the private domain as an organising principle for the home, against the epistemological framework of grand discourses that used the home as a terrain on which to construct their nationalist and colonial ideologies. Home, as embodied by women, was of symbolic importance to both the fashioning

of the nation (Mother/India) and the sustenance of the Empire in India (Raj/memsahib). The very idea of India as a mother predicated the importance of women in the idea and sanctity of the nation. However, in this framework at the time women remained mute politically. Alison Blunt's *Domicile and Diaspora* (2005) has explored the strategic importance of the home as a varied and politically charged space in colonial and post-colonial India:

Studies of imperial and nationalist domesticity show the home to be a site of inclusion and exclusion, reproduction and contestation, regulation and transgression, confinement and freedom. In their lives both within and beyond the politically charged spaces of home, women have domesticated imperial and nationalist policies in similarly diverse, often paradoxical ways.¹⁶⁰

I would argue that Majumdar's domestic chronicle can offer a new and vibrant insight into the fashioning of both Imperial (British) and Indian homes at the time nationalism was emerging and imperialism was falling in India. The figuration of India as a feminine terrain was taken out of an Orientalist textbook and placed into an empowering framework where its violation was used as a tool to ferment anti-imperial sentiments. 'Gendered as female and embodying the nation as home, Bharat Mata - Mother India – was one of the central symbols of anti-imperial nationalism in India and has been an important force in the rise of Hindu nationalism since the 1980s.' (Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora*, 28)

Partha Chatterjee has also theorised that the position of women was central to the formation of Indian nationalism and its struggle with British imperialism:

The new patriarchy advocated by nationalism conferred upon women the honour of a new social responsibility, and by associating the task of female emancipation with the historical goal of sovereign nationhood, bound them to a new, and yet entirely legitimate, subordination.¹⁶¹

As Chatterjee notes however, the congruence between nationhood and womanhood was not entirely without its modes of oppression. Whilst being encased within old (Orientalist) and new (nationalist) patriarchal conventions, the woman in India was also framed within another classic Orientalist design; the pervasion of intractable spatial binaries. At its formation, Indian nationalism was concerned with adapting to modernity without losing what it deemed to be as its difference from the West, its spirituality as manifested in its culture. This can be conceived of as a continuation of Orientalist logic and thus, the dialectic of interior and exterior was reformulated: ‘the discourse of nationalism shows that the material/spiritual distinction was condensed into an analogous, but ideologically far more powerful, dichotomy: that between the outer and the inner.’ (Chatterjee, ‘Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women,’ 624) The public sphere was to be modern and the private domain was to remain spiritual and traditional. In employing Majumdar’s *Family History*, I would argue that counter narrative texts from within the interior sphere were present during this fractious period at the interstices between the fall of imperialism and the realisation of nationalism. Majumdar’s family treatise mediates between the binaries set up by colonial discourse and recapitulated by Indian nationalism. It also goes beyond the navigation of Indian nationalism and colonial discourse because it is able to penetrate the Orientalist divide.

Family History is a domestic chronicle as well as a personal memoir that charts the nomadic movements of the Bonnerjee family between the Orient and Occident (Britain and India). Majumdar charts a succession of actual homes that are continually rearranged, re-mirrored and reconstituted, where they literally act as signifiers for the slippery surface that those conceptions of home can be when they are put under the postmodern microscope. For example, the Victorian home for

colonial administrators was viewed as the template on which to build or in fact rebuild the domestic spheres of countries thousands of miles away. Majumdar's text illustrates that the very concept of home is deeply contingent and in flux both metaphorically and literally in her case, echoing Grewal's protestation that home and harem are 'relational nationalist and [Orientalist] constructs that require the deployment of women and female bodies within the antagonistic and comparative framework of colonial epistemology.' (Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 5) *Family History* engages in this process but does so from a new perspective, that of the Indian woman who complicates the historical relationship between the Victorian home to the Indian domestic sphere. Antoinette Burton in her editing of the text has argued against the historical idea that home can be reified in a nationalist or colonialist context:

[Home] is one of the organising fictions of national literatures and ideologies, the project of remembering home has produced elaborate interiors and imaginative architectures that are vivid ... [and approximate.] ... These dwelling places of the mind seduce but do not finally satisfy, precisely because they can only ever "almost look *something* like home." (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 32)

Majumdar is also complicit within this restructuring of the domestic away from the public vaults of history writing. In recuperating her family history away from the annals of the Indian National Congress she highlights how that project was a bourgeois project that was both dependent on and silencing of, the private and domestic Indian woman, a process she consciously reverses.

Throughout the text, Majumdar interweaves the story of Indian nationalism through the figure of her father with the intimate and at times trivial details of her family's private history. In doing this, Majumdar highlights a colonial space that Sara Mills has argued troubles the binary divide between public and private because each element lapses into the other. Mills proclaims that 'the colonial context troubles

that binary divide, because the power relations inscribed therein are cross-cut with other power relations and ... women participate in these power relations through their role within colonial societies.’ (Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, 34) With reference to the text, Hemangini’s domestic role undergirds her husband’s ability to play a public role, her mobility allows him to stay in India, and thus the two elements are consistently intertwined throughout the text. Although Mills’s work concentrates on British female writers and their ability to transform the domestic space, I would like to propose the movement and elastication of Majumdar’s domestic sphere as a further element of the blurring between the private and public space in colonial discourse. Colonised women also had the ability to subvert discourses (patriarchy/Orientalism) that viewed domesticity as distinct from the grand narratives of colonialism.

Burton, in her analysis of the text, has stated that ‘that the purchase of the new house at Park Street [in Calcutta] and the founding of the INC should have occurred almost exactly at the same moment testifies to the ... inseparability of their family narrative from the story of Indian nationalism.’ (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 46) In the narrative linearity of the text however, Majumdar places the move into Park Street before the introduction of nationalist politics. Majumdar, only in the next section writes: ‘at the beginning of the eighteen-eighties, a movement was springing up amongst the educated men in India generally and especially in Bengal, towards a desire for political advancement.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 61) Thus, Majumdar consistently privileges the contents of her domestic narrative above the insertion of nationalist politics and history. She consciously declares her narrative authority upon the text with her promptings to the reader that they are reading a family chronicle: ‘at this point I propose to write a short account of P.M’s sisters and

their families, as that has not yet been done.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 28) The final statement can be viewed in metaphorical terms; she is excavating and cataloguing a domestic terrain that needs to be inserted onto the patriarchal and masculine sphere of the nationalist movement and also by implication the colonial world which it sought to reorder. This foregrounding of the private over the public is reiterated in the text when she proclaims: ‘as this is only a family chronicle, and not a political history of the times, enough has been said to indicate my father’s interests and activities at this time.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 65) Thus, the nexus of public/private is reversed, the minutiae, local, feminine, interior and familial takes precedence over the general, national, masculine, anterior and the political in her historical document.

W.C. Bonnerjee, although tied to India because of his political ambitions with the Indian National Congress and his thriving law practice in Calcutta, wanted his children to have the benefits of an English education. As a consequence, Hemangini and all the children were sent to live in Croydon, initially with an English family (the Woods) but eventually they took over their home at 44 Landsdowne Road, Croydon. On settling in Croydon, England in 1888 Majumdar gives a detailed description of the house she moves into: from the size of the house and its individual rooms, the garden and different road names in the locality. She describes: ‘the garden was more or less triangular in shape ... and the hayloft window overlooked no less than five roads, as our house was the last one in Bedford Park, Sydenham Road North ... Bedford Place ... Dingwell Road ... and Sydenham Road.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 69) The house is described as a: ‘three storied house with drawingroom, diningroom, and study, ten bedrooms, and a capacious basement with a separate entrance, consisting of a large servants hall, kitchen, scullery, larder, store

cupboard, wine and coal cellar, panty and china closet.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 71) The domestic architecture is meticulously detailed here, to convey the fluidity of home as an organising structure that could be situated on both sides of the Orientalist divide. In cataloguing the specific details of the different houses, she has lived in, Majumdar engages in a personal recollection of the past that actually highlights the ability of home to be a malleable entity.

The need to cling onto individual and personal details in her narrative is a tacit indication of the way such details are subsumed within dominant structures of knowledge, in this case most notably Indian nationalism, but also Orientalism. This process of interior cataloguing repeated in the text is an attempt to extricate such historical traces from the annals of patriarchal discourses that have historically neglected them. Majumdar declares that that ‘house must have a chapter to itself.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 71) Sara Mills, in her study *Gender and Colonial Space* (2005), has stressed the importance of domestic architecture on the psyche of both the colonial and colonised subject: ‘private life was lived as if always in public, as if colonial superiority had to be on constant display ... houses were for the display of a particular type of colonial sensibility.’¹⁶² Majumdar unconsciously demonstrates this in her cataloguing of architectural space, acknowledging it as a key component in the ordering of colonial relations; however, she places the emphasis on the private domain as an organising structure for the private Indian woman and deliberately places it outside of grand colonial discourses that would otherwise relegate the female to the periphery.

Majumdar recreates throughout the text a variety of homes both in India and Britain that can be viewed as directly modelled on the classic Victorian home. The

house in Park Street in Calcutta is purchased and renovated to mimic the construction of the archetypal elite Victorian country home. She notes: ‘there was a pleasant garden, with a tennis court on the East of the house, and a range of stables ... and to the North of the house a flower garden, with narrow paths and two fern houses.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 60) Janaki Majumdar consciously connects the interior decoration of the house to the Victorian ideal: ‘the 6 Park Street house was beautifully furnished in solid mid-Victorian style, and all the appointments were in keeping and of the choicest character. My father had his crockery and cutlery specially made for him in England.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 60) Within the family unit the familial structure is also coordinated along the lines of Victorian ideals of education and upbringing: ‘the eldest son was doing well at Rugby, the girls were very clever and rapidly acquiring English culture, the youngest children were at hand to play with, and the nursery was presided over by a nice English nurse.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 67) Majumdar betrays the conscious replication of the Victorian ideal of home by an Indian family that highlights the extent to which elite families such as the Bonnerjee’s co-opted themselves within anglicised ideals of the family unit and domestic sphere, a form of colonial mimicry within the imperial metropole.

An element that has been historically overlooked, however, is the way in which Majumdar’s family were active participants in the shaping and framing of these discourses, they were not simply inert copycats. They were discerning and the strengths and emotional attachments to their Indian heritage are also protected and placed at the heart of Victorian society at the imperial centre not just at the periphery in colonial Calcutta. Again, the metaphor of the domestic architecture of the house is used to convey this reversal of domestic normativity. Explaining the shock to find no

bathroom and only one lavatory in their Kidderpore house in Croydon, Majumdar comments that ‘this was shocking to Indian ideas, so a bathroom was added on the first floor landing, and two more lavatories.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 71) Subversively, their house in Britain is portrayed as inferior to their Calcutta abode; Kidderpore ‘made an exceedingly comfortable family home, though it was not of course half so grand or luxurious as the Calcutta house.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 71) With these details Majumdar highlights the interrelated nature of the Victorian ideal of home in elite Indian families, they were subject to competing allegiances that blurred the distinctions between Britain and India, and also complicated British ideas of the ethnic specificity of the Victorian home.

When analysed against Orientalist ideas of the sanctity of the British Victorian home, one can see the subversive possibilities of the hitherto unacknowledged contribution of Indian families and women, albeit elite, within the development of these discourses. Majumdar recreates a Victorian home within Britain that was predicated on elite Victorian ideals but without being able to completely slough off the weight of Indian cultural affiliations, creating a hybrid home that was the platform for her family’s unique engagement with colonialism, highlighting how it was an interrelated and dialogical relationship. This paradigm is delineated within the text in the way Kidderpore, a house modelled on a mixture of Victorian and Indian values, becomes the centre for Indian students within Britain, where they were able to travel home imaginatively: ‘what an oasis Kidderpore must have been to the dozens of young Indian students in London who came there on Sundays and were transported in spirit to their own country.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 71) Thus, the hybridity of the Majumdar home is figured through the way the house is remodelled to suit both British conventions and Indian respectability; a

spatial dynamic that allows for an intermingling of cultures that draws the students to the Kidderpore house in Croydon. The Indian students who visit then become travellers who invest in the ability of a British home in Victorian England to be a partial gateway back to India. This demonstrates how an actual house in its architectural arrangement and space could act as a metaphor for a cultural process where Indian culture could adapt and coexist within Victorian society in a proto-multicultural dynamic. Burton has argued that ‘in the context of colonial Bengal, Janaki Majumdar’s “family history” acts as a counter narrative to the family romance that underpinned elite discourses of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.’ (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 33) I would like to expand such a notion by arguing that such a “history” also has deep implications for colonial Britain within that time frame, as well as how we view post-colonial Britain within the twenty-first century.

The concept of home and belonging which is at the heart of many of the contemporary multicultural debates needs to be connected to this evidence of mutual constitution where hybridity is not viewed as a purely a contemporary condition. Majumdar actually emphasises the hybridity of her own name which hints at the hybrid nature of colonial relations: ‘I was saddled with one Indian, English and Greek name.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 66) I would like to invoke one of Robert Young’s definitions of hybridity here when he declares that cultural hybridity is a cyclical and self perpetuating structure:

There is no single, or correct, concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes. It shows that we are still locked into parts of the ideological network of a culture that we think and presume that we have surpassed.¹⁶³

Majumdar's narrative highlights the hybrid nature of colonial culture which in turn infuses modern notions of hybridity. Hence, her text needs to be placed alongside modern debates of multiculturalism and cultural syncretism: such discourses have historical resonances that need to be further connected and explored. The following section will look at Majumdar's *Family History* as a case of women writing history. I will analyse how personal narratives incumbent on memory and internal analysis constitute a historical archive that acts as an alternative to Orientalist and patriarchal discourses which view themselves as the meta-narrative of colonial history.

Domestic Historiography

Family History is a text that has been buried within the domestic sphere literally. Burton attempts to extricate the text metaphorically from the domestic sphere by arguing that the text constitutes a history in its own right, even though it lies outside the framework of conventional history writing. She seeks to place it within a revised notion of the colonial historical archive. This reification of the domestic as a sphere untouched by public affairs has been central to the construction of women as ahistorical or outside history.¹⁶⁴ Thus, Burton argues that due attention needs to be paid to these private and personal documents in order to reverse the hegemonic and overarching patriarchal histories written by Orientalists on the one hand and nationalists on the other. In her introduction to *Family History*, Burton states:

The sheer density of ‘archival evidence now available “in public” speaks to the promise of Indian women’s history in the twenty-first century, both as a practice of recovery and as a site of resistance to and critique of dominant narratives, nationalist and otherwise.’¹⁶⁵

I would contest that such an approach feeds into the possibilities of reverse Orientalism, where Indian female writers used tools both akin and alien to the Orientalist historian. Majumdar uses the familial, private and the archive of memory to construct a narrative about the interrelated development of modernities between Britain and India that can be read against the grand narratives of colonial history. Female domestic history can become history in itself.

Reina Lewis in *Gendering Orientalism* has also called for a contingent and relational form of female history writing that could both co-opt and resist dominant structures of knowledge production:

We need a form of history writing that is able to find the missing female object *at the same time* as it disaggregates the category ‘woman’ ... this means we can research how women as women – since their gendered socialization affected the conditions of production, reception and circulation of their work – contributed to the culture of imperialism and the imperial project itself ... we do not lose the woman in history therefore, but are able to locate her as a nodal point at the intersection of a variety of different determining discourses. (Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, 239)

My analysis strives to achieve this by highlighting how Majumdar’s text figured as a narrative that showcases the interrelated nature of colonialism, where her form of history allows us a glimpse into a world that was engendered by women whose private experiences informed the public, indirectly if not directly. This relational and fluid concept of history is figured by the text in the way ‘Janaki’s memoir works as much to serve the family’s history as it does to satisfy a daughter’s curiosity about her mother’s past; indeed in political terms, it makes those two sentimental projects one and the same.’ (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 66) Throughout the text the private and the public constantly collapse into each other, each becoming mutually informed. Burton has written that Majumdar ‘attempts to manage the political implications of the past by putting her own narratives of home within reach of national memory, yet just outside the grasp of a fully public history.’ (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 66) What this study proposes is for these private memorials to be placed alongside public documents because they are inextricably linked.

Textually the narrative is formally structured against the dominant conventions of ‘objective’ history writing that both the nationalist and colonialists claimed for themselves. The book is almost postmodern and post-structural in form as it veers backwards and forwards from India to Britain and this spatial de-centring is mirrored in the way the narrative is figured in a series of analeptic and proleptic movements which rupture the temporal linearity of the text. This dynamic is

illustrated perfectly on page eighty-six of the text when Majumdar chooses to describe her brother's wedding two months before her temporal location as opposed to proceeding lineally in the narrative with her trip back to Calcutta. She writes: our 'passages were booked from London to Bombay in the 'peninsular' in December 1893. But before going on with the narrative I must say something about the wedding.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 86) Again this figures as a reversal of the Orientalist paradigm where history was to be coordinated along the strictest modes of temporality. Caren Kaplan calls for an approach based on Chandra Mohanty's thinking where 'oppositional agency occurs through a temporality of struggle ... defined as an insistent, simultaneous nonsynchronous process characterized by multiple locations rather than a search for beginnings and endings.'¹⁶⁶ In *Family History*, the reader is left to decipher what information is deemed relevant and what is not, the text makes no claim to absolute authority. Majumdar invites 'the reader to explain these incidents as he thinks best.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 30) The text also hints at the fallibility of the archive by hinting at details and events that could have been missed in the documentation of the historical narrative. On visiting Darjeeling she states: 'this was not really our first visit, which should have been mentioned before.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 91)

This psycho-historical fallibility is elucidated by Michael Schudson who warns that in re-narrating the past, distortion of those events is inevitable:

Memory is distortion since memory is invariably and inevitably selective. A way of seeing is a way of not seeing; a way of remembering is a way of forgetting, too. If memory were only a kind of registration, a "true" memory might be possible. But memory is a process of encoding information, storing information, and strategically retrieving information, and there are social, psychological, and historical influences at each point.¹⁶⁷

These acknowledgements in regards to the instability of social memories are not terms in which meta-narratives are willing to negotiate. Thus, Majumdar's memorials are a subversive counterpoint to the certainties of both nationalisms and Orientalisms. The idea that memory can be distorted on a personal level makes it even more problematic for 'collective memory, where the past event or experience remembered was truly a different event or experience for its different participants.' (Schudson, 'Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory,' 346) This concession is realised by *Family History* on both a patriarchal level, which pitches it against nationalist histories, and also across the East/West divide which further complicates Orientalist historicisms.¹⁶⁸

The conscious deployment of her mother Hemangini's story as the central focus of the text, as opposed to her father W.C Bonnerjee, is also an explicit attempt to move past meta-narratives and reconcile the private with the public. Hemangini's domestication represents the ways in which domestic space undergirded and made possible the modernising project of late nineteenth century Indian nationalist politics. (Woolacott, Rev of 'Women Writing History,' 188) She becomes the unwitting victim of her husband's embrace of modernity which in turn demanded of her a life that was out of keeping with the 'traditional' Indian woman. Majumdar recounts: 'in afterlife my mother often used to tell us how very difficult she found it to come out of purdah and live in English fashion ... she had to give up wearing a sari, and to wear an English dress.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 48) The competing claims of modernity and tradition are fed through her story: 'she could not be seen by her servants and neighbours leaving her house in a sari; but on the other hand she could not arrive at her mother-in-law's or mother's house in an English dress.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 48)

However, she is shown to be successful in fashioning the highly malleable and hybrid identity that was demanded of her: 'she solved this problem by taking a sari with her in the carriage, drawing down the blinds and changing on the way ... and she went on doing this until her relations got used to her new ways.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 48-49) James Clifford states that 'women in Diaspora remain attached to, and empowered by, a "home culture and a tradition – selectively ... body and dress protocols are preserved and adapted in a network of ongoing connections outside the host country.' (Clifford, *Routes*, 259) Thus, the female figure in the shape of Hemangini becomes the potent symbol of a hybrid presence who negotiated the competing claims of the colonial world and figured as a diasporic sensibility that precedes Clifford's more modern context. Majumdar's history gives voice to these hitherto neglected histories that wrestled with modernity on a local level where the nationalists were trying to negotiate it on a macro level. She is figured as a singular female terrain, amongst many others, on which colonial discourse was moulded, where its tensions were centred and adapted.

Another reversal of conventional history writing, as represented by both the nationalists in India and the Orientalists whose job was to 'write' colonial history, is the way in which Majumdar consistently throughout the text fractures her own narrative authority. Other narrative voices are inserted into the text, thus attempting to excavate the polyvalent and multiple subjectivities that engendered colonial relations. This invokes a contingent approach to history writing that aims to 'dislodge singular, privileged accounts in favour of more multiple and diverse ones.' (Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, 181) On page forty-seven, a note by Majumdar's sister Nellie, alters some of the details that had previously been given about their mother's religious convictions as well offering further details that could have been missed in

Majumdar's subjective narrative. Janaki at first states: 'my mother was an extremely devout practising Hindu, and it is hard to find out now when she began to be attracted by Christianity.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 46) To which her sister's note explains:

I believe she was first confirmed in the church of England because Colonel and Mrs Wood were then members of the Church of England ... mama joined them and was baptised by total immersion, when they were living in Anerley. I am sorry I can't tell you when. (Majumdar, *Family History*, 47)

Crucially, the note adds further detail to the narrative offered by Majumdar but it also acknowledges its own incompleteness, thus hinting at the instability of all subjective historicisms and their pretensions to absolute knowledge. This can be viewed as a surrogate emphasis on the idea that all historical discourse rests on a palimpsest of subjectivities that exist both in accord and in tension with each other.

Majumdar also inserts a note by Mrs Arthur Alexander, a friend of her sister Susie who offers her impressions of the Bonnerjee family. This can be viewed as a strategic reversal of Orientalist history writing that elided the voice of subaltern women in their constructions of colonial history. In particular, the singularity of female Orientalist perceptions of Indian women is brought into focus as Majumdar deliberately gives a voice to the white Western woman in her own narrative history, thus hinting at the dialogical process needed to find genuine cross-cultural understanding where historical documentation is both nuanced and balanced. Mrs Alexander writes: 'here I would like to say that one reason I have always so enjoyed being a guest at Mrs Bonnerjee's was because I got a glimpse of a world to me then unknown.' (Majumdar, *Family History*, 77) This can also be viewed as an implicit criticism of Western feminists of the time who sought to frame the Indian woman within dominant Orientalist tropes. Within the narrative, both Susie and Hemangini

Bonnerjee are portrayed as active, intelligent, independent and strong; all qualities outside of the Orientalist taxonomies that Indian women had historically been defined by. Alexander writes of Hemangini that ‘she managed her large household, her banking account, and her children better and more conscientiously than many Englishwomen.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 79) Within this paradigm Majumdar hints at a historical discourse that can incorporate both Oriental and Western views in conjunction with and not against each other. Robert Young offers one such alternative view of history when he writes: ‘history may be made up of the multiple meanings of specific, particular histories – without their necessarily being in turn part of a larger meaning of an underlying force or idea.’¹⁶⁹ *Family History*, can be viewed as just one attempt at historical objectivity where the others’ view is intertwined within one’s own subjective viewpoint, a relational approach that could render colonial relations with more understanding without the need to form a master narrative that claims direct correspondence to reality.

Majumdar emphasises the validity of outside viewpoints and the need to coalesce these with one’s own highly subjective accounts. She states ‘Mrs. Alexander’s notes give a very good idea of our life in Croydon, with the older children coming home for the holidays from university and school, and the younger ones going to day schools in the town.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 80) Janaki refrains from placing herself at the centre of the story, a formula opposed to the Orientalist construction of history that placed Orientalists at the centre of their own ‘stories’ and the events relayed were always to be narrated against their own living reality. Not entering the text until page sixty-six illustrates the way in which Majumdar reverses this Orientalist paradigm: ‘on 26 June 1886 I was born at 6 Park Street and named Janaki Agnes Penelope.’ (Majumdar, *Family History*, 66) She

starts with her husband's story and then moves onto her father's; however, neither story is the main focus of the narrative: the dominant patriarchies of both the nationalist movement and Indian marital tradition are decentred, they are not allowed to become the dominant arches of the narrative, but are not sidelined completely either. As the public is commingled with the private, so too is the masculine with the feminine. Implicit within this dynamic, is the idea that a female history needs to incorporate the masculine to avoid the myopia of patriarchal histories.

Majumdar's memorial raises provocative questions about the extent to which memory and personal recollections can be used to excavate, constitute and define history. Burton has argued that memory itself has been 'represented ... as dependent and mendacious (fictional, fickle) and therefore of dubious authority and reliability, all of which are the hallmarks of conventional female identity in the context of a heterosexual symbolic economy.' (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 21) Majumdar's *Family History* then can be viewed in light of this fundamental liminality, where objective evidence can never fully pertain to being the absolute truth:

We must concede the fundamental liminality of the archive: its porousness, its permeability, and the messiness of all history that is made by and from it. We might even think of it as a "third space": neither primary or secondary because it participates in and helps to create, several levels of interpretative possibility at once. (Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 26)

I would argue that this is exactly why *Family History*, through the vehicle of personal memory, should be viewed as a genuine document of colonial history as all archives are in essence systems of knowledge, discourses that are shaped according to the dominant modes of power and representation. Majumdar's account and this project are attempts to represent and give power to this new personal form of historical evidence. In chapter three, I will be placing my focus onto the inter-war

period where both Nirad C. Chaudhuri and Mulk Raj Anand confound the received absence of Indian voices in response to such a tumultuous period in modern global history.

Chapter Three – The Inter- and Post-War Settlement

Settlement into Britain from the Indian subcontinent has generally been defined as a post-war and post Empire phenomenon. This is only partly correct because there was a burgeoning presence of Indian travellers, soldiers, settlers and writers in Britain both before and during the interface of the great World Wars of the early twentieth century. This was a consequence and residual effect of the earlier settlements dealt with in the preceding chapters and also the outcome of an increasingly globalised world precipitated by the global scale of the wars. The fall of Empires also reversed the immigration movements of people on a grander scale from the colony to the metropole. Imperial and political interests were replaced by personal motivations of economic and social improvement. This was the prime motivation behind the Windrush generation of the 1950s and the immigration of people from the newly partitioned subcontinent. This chapter will probe the ideological exchange that was becoming ever more central to a rapidly changing social environment within Britain. Nirad C. Chaudhuri was a Bengali writer who was a self confirmed Anglophile who still viewed British imperialism as a civilising force. Mulk Raj Anand polarised this idiom with his nationalist politics and reforming zeal that was concentrated on the Indian social spectrum and its need to be freed from imperial control. This chapter's focus will be centred on the various ways in which these writers engaged with the changing global situation where the colony was no longer controlled by the metropole, where new social and political problems were emerging such as racism, multiculturalism (in its modern sense) and globalisation. The Orientalist's certainties were being slowly dismantled and

vigorously challenged. Were these challenges comprehensive? Was there a consistent thread showcased by the two writers? A new Britain was being imagined in the twentieth century and these writers were central to these imaginings as they produced a reverse Orientalist construction of Britain.

The upheavals of the World Wars were determining factors in the falls of Western Empires the world over. Recriminations from these geopolitical realignments are still being felt today, especially in the Middle East and the subcontinent. The nationalist movement in India had been gathering momentum under the surface of British rule well before the beginning of the century and contestations to this power had been figured through protagonists such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammed Jinnah. However, these nationalist and freedom sentiments were not confined to the political world but were being debated in and through literary circles. The political motivations of Nirad C. Chaudhuri and Mulk Raj Anand were particularly polarised for and against British rule; however, both used the fissure of imperial rule to explore the newly reformulated East-West cultural, political and sociological compass. The fall of the Empire precipitated a movement from India to Britain where the presence and influence of Indians in the metropole was not just confined to the later part of the twentieth century. Mulk Raj Anand spent many years in Britain both at school in Harrow and university at Cambridge in the 1920s. Also, Nirad C. Chaudhuri contributed to a critique of Britain before writers such as Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi were seen as standard bearers for a multicultural literary Britain. The following section will begin with Chaudhuri's Anglo-centric cataloguing of life in Bengal, his subsequent travel to Britain and his eventual settlement in Oxford.

The Imperial Advocate

Nirad C. Chaudhuri was born in the town of Kishorganj in the Mymensingh district of East Bengal (now in Bangladesh) on the 23rd of November 1897. He was born into an educated class in Bengal that was a direct result of the early Orientalist movement in India which had its epicentre in Bengal. The establishment of the Royal Asiatic Society, a University, and the indelible imprint left by figures such as William Jones and Thomas Macaulay, were central to the establishment of this social legacy. Chaudhuri's father (himself a famous Bengali writer) encouraged his sons to aspire to educated growth in all the arts, but also cultural and political life. He 'was a liberal "protestant" Hindu, monotheist, enlightened and mainly concerned with educating his children in a rational way of life, encouraging them to pursue what were thought of as English qualities of energy and self-reliance.'¹⁷⁰ This prompting was to be the beginning of Chaudhuri's lifelong engagement with Britain, its culture, language, politics and social landscape; a legacy that continued up until his death in 1999. Chaudhuri's Anglo-centrism was pronounced in literature from an early stage both in his literary writings in articles and magazines and also in the publication of his seminal text *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in 1951. He graduated from Scottish Church College at Calcutta University with a first class honours degree in history in 1918. Subsequently, he went onto to study for a M.A in history that he was unable to complete. After this disappointment he gave up formal studies and firstly became a government clerk in the military accounts department and then went onto become assistant editor of the *Modern Review* in 1926.¹⁷¹ Finally in 1938, Chaudhuri became a secretary to the great Indian political leader, Sarat Chandra Bose.

To commence any study on Nirad Chaudhuri's writing one has to understand the depth in which the West and Britain in particular had on the broadening of Chaudhuri's intellect and literary output. Chaudhuri felt betrayed and ignored by the Bengali intelligentsia and looked for validation in the anglophone world, the 'unknown' in the title, thus, is an allusion to the intellectual circle that had sidelined him.¹⁷² The England of his imagination dictated the terms in which he viewed Britain and thus implicated him within the Orientalist tradition which viewed Britain and Imperial rule as a civilising force that was imperative for the betterment of India as a modernising civilisation.¹⁷³ In this respect, Chaudhuri can actually be viewed as an Indian Orientalist who viewed the progress of India as a process that called for India to change from what it was into what the West and England itself symbolised. His declaration of support for the Pax Britannica at the very start of his autobiography was widely decried and rejected in India by readers who viewed Chaudhuri as a mouthpiece for the dying embers of imperialism. Chaudhuri provocatively dedicates his autobiography to 'the memory of the British Empire in India which conferred subjecthood on us but withheld citizenship; to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: "civus Britannica sum" because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped and quickened by the same British rule.' (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, v) In this acclamation, Chaudhuri underlines his credentials as an Orientalist. He affirms a gratitude to the British Empire for allowing him the scope to write the book in the first place.

Chaudhuri consciously indulges in the Orientalist textual attitude and many of his aphorisms are borrowed from the Orientalist literary canon. However, it is England that is mythologised. William Walsh states that:

England had been a living presence in Chaudhuri's imagination from his early days, partly because of his father's care that he should learn English and the good sense of the teaching methods he adopted to this end, partly through the books and pictures in his house and partly through the poems he read and the history he studied. (Walsh, *Readings in Commonwealth Literature*, 27)

In one example, Chaudhuri declares his love for the romantic generation where 'English poetry was to me and to my brother, even before we could understand it fully, the most wonderful reading in the world. We read the usual things, Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray", "We are Seven", and "Daffodils", for example.' (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 111) It is the Wordsworthian 'green and pleasant land' that he imagines:

I could never think of England, as I thought of Bengal and of India, as a stretch of land alone. Combined visions of land and sea were always fleeting through my mind and before my eyes whenever I tried to think of England. (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 110)

Chaudhuri imagines an archetypal England of rivers and countryside encrypted by the romantics that crucially dichotomises it with India and thus regurgitates the Orientalist formulation that India and Britain were fundamentally different. It required intervention for them to amalgamate. Pallavi Rastogi notes the uneven dialectic in which Britain and India are juxtaposed. 'India is often represented as small, provincial, and stifling while England connotes an all-encompassing vastness, vigour, and above all cultural antiquity, always subsuming the world in its grasp. Thus Chaudhuri localizes his home country and globalizes the metropolis.'¹⁷⁴ Provocatively, Chaudhuri can be viewed to render India comprehensible through a British Orientalist lens, with its incumbent epistemologies and ontologies.

In respect to the construction of Britain in his imagination, Chaudhuri explains how these archetypes were formed through a process where Britain was exoticised. Chaudhuri delineates a paradigm where the Orientalist textual attitude is

reversed. England was formed for him in the text book, shaped in his Bengali mind through the imagination:

The chiaroscuro of our knowledge of England was extremely sensational. It had intense highlights in certain places and deep unrelieved shadows in others, so that what we knew gripped us with immeasurably greater power than it would have done had we seen it in more diffused and, consequently, more realistic light. (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 97)

Chaudhuri describes how these pictures of England were manufactured in his imagination in the same way the Orient was constructed in the Western mind:

However scrappy and simple our ideas of English life and society might have been, they could not exist at all without the accompaniment of some visual suggestion. Everything we read about the British Isles or in English evoked pictures of the external appearance of the country even when not avowedly descriptive. But we had plenty of verbal descriptions, and in addition to these we had pictures to go upon ... Taken together, these gave us the impression of a country of great beauty of aspect, a country which possessed not only beautiful spots but also place-names which sounded beautiful. (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 108-9)

In these descriptions, Chaudhuri is avowedly Anglo-centric. He exoticises England and views it as a place of riches both cultural and material. Through this dynamic he can be viewed to mirror Orientalist exotica practiced in and towards India; however, this subversive practice is tempered by the manner in which he still corroborates the Orientalist dialogism of East (pupil) and West (teacher). This form of reverse Orientalism, exhibited by Chaudhuri, lacks overt critique of the West. Instead, it functions as a narrative tool by which the Orientalist gaze, and its terms of reference, could be assumed by the Indian native in their imaginings of England. It is not an absolute reversal of Orientalist discourse but a partial re-orientation.

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1968) is styled outside of the confines of what was expected of an autobiography. Chaudhuri himself conceded that the text was just as much an historical account of India as it was a chronicle of

his own private life. 'Whether Chaudhuri writes memoirs, travelogues or social and political commentary, he refracts his vision of historical reality through himself.'¹⁷⁵

In summarising towards the end of the text, Chaudhuri writes: 'I shall state the hypothesis now. It is nothing more nor less than a view of the course of Indian history, and I offer an essay embodying it.' (Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 456) Sudesh Misra focuses on Chaudhuri's claim that his autobiography exhibits an objective knowledge that eschews personal opinion: 'Chaudhuri espouses the role of the disinterested narrator, chronicling incidents and events which are indelibly etched into his memory and which have obvious social ramifications that the book can be regarded as ... a contribution to contemporary history.'¹⁷⁶ So in this respect Chaudhuri's autobiography can be viewed as a pseudo Orientalist text because it is figured as a grand narrative of India through the lens of classic Orientalist epistemologies. However, I would argue that his autobiography, positioned as an historical account of India, is far from objective and suffers from the same subjective leanings that influenced Orientalist histories of India. The Anglicist and utilitarian James Mill's, *The History of British India*, is one particular example of this subjectivity, presented as an objective historical account. I will be dealing with Chaudhuri's travelogue *A Passage to England* (1959) in the following section, where I will demonstrate that Chaudhuri re-routes the imperialist journey into the metropole whilst continuing to exhibit Orientalist sentiments.

A Passage to England

The credentials for *A Passage to England* to be viewed as a reverse Orientalist text are obvious. Its title adapts that of E.M. Forster's novel about India, which along with Rudyard Kipling's literary canon, was the key literary depiction of the British Raj in India. Chaudhuri outlines his reverse Orientalist knowledge of England at the very beginning of the travelogue. He describes how England was created in his imagination:

My earlier, and as I believe, truer, ideas of England were all acquired from literature, history, and geography. Accumulated since childhood, these ideas, so far as they went, had built up a fairly comprehensive and homogenous picture of the country and its people. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 4)

Initially, the English landscape he encounters corroborates all the preconceived ideas and pictures he had formulated in his mind about the heart of the Empire. Chaudhuri summarises:

In no case was the idea of England I had gained from books contradicted by anything I saw, it was on the contrary completed, and that is why I can no longer recover the original bookish idea. It has been absorbed by the reality of which it was an abstraction, like thawing ice in water. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 15)

Ruvani Ranasinha argues that Chaudhuri's relationship with both India and Britain from an early age was an act of conscious self translation exemplified by 'the process of affiliation in an extreme form: identification through culture, where the colonised replace filiative (that is, by descent) connections to indigenous cultural traditions, with affiliations to the social and political culture of the colonising power.' (Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers*, 74) England, like India, for Chaudhuri was a textual attitude dictated by imperial epistemologies, which at first he is loathe to challenge.

The construction of the travelogue is formulaic in the sense that Chaudhuri strives to offer a comprehensive account of the Occidental heartland. He divides the text into discussing the English scene, culture, landscape, people and state, all of which he finds space to praise. Pallavi Rastogi argues that Chaudhuri begins the text in hyper-descriptive mode:

Chaudhuri's early impressions of England are at once hyper-cerebral and supremely aesthetic: he thrills to the poetry and music, the art and the landscape, the food and the drink. The English landscape – cultural, geographical, and architectural – provides Chaudhuri with a stage on which he can enact his Englishness by asserting England's place as the Mother of all Nations. (Rastogi, 'Timeless England Will Remain Hanging in the Air,' 321)

This textual dynamic is exhibited in Chaudhuri's declaration that he intends to study English people and their culture in an overtly Orientalist design for clarity and classification. 'For all these reasons my account of the English people will be an impression of their collective appearance and behaviour, larded with such remarks on their part as ultimately succeeded in reaching my ears and fixing themselves in my memory.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 71) Chaudhuri imbibes Orientalist dogma to the extent that he consciously replicates its design for comprehension, control and definition. The relative silence of English people themselves in the text compares with Orientalist texts that were very much the same in regards to the anonymity of native voices in the rendering of the foreign landscape.

In positioning Chaudhuri as a reverse Orientalist one has to acknowledge and critique his classic Orientalist's attributes. In the travelogue, he actually seems to encourage an Orientalising and imperial zeal: 'to enjoy the world is to exploit it, and to exploit it is to reduce its substance. It is natural in Christian Occidentals to indulge this propensity.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 11) Chaudhuri's language and tone is also very reminiscent of Orientalist travelogues dealt with in an earlier

chapter in its depiction of English social scenes. He details them in an incredulous manner:

As long as I remained in England a persistent trance-like effect never left me, and nothing seemed quite real, not even the human beings I was meeting. The only persons who appeared to be made of flesh and blood were the Englishmen I had known in India. All the rest glided like wraiths. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 14)

Chaudhuri underlines the happiness and contentment he finds in Britain during his travels. He positions Britain as a place of nourishment and fulfilment:

This by itself was a great joy to me, and I told everybody that never before, except in the intimacy of my family life, had I been so happy as I was during my short stay in England. It was the literal truth, and the happiness has lasted. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 227)

Chaudhuri offers genuine admiration for the welfare state and its nourishing effect for society: 'I did not go to England with any faith in the Welfare State, far less with any ready-made admiration for it. But after seeing it with my own eyes I came away with a genuine respect for it.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 199) The egalitarian nature of the system is lauded because it includes foreigners who 'feel glad that there is as much welfare going, more especially because in the Welfare State there is hardly any distinction made between the natives and the foreigners.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 203)

His analysis of the Occident links English temper to English climate in the same way Orientalists drew parallels in the East, where the social temperature of the people inculcated their perceived licentiousness and inertia:

I think the weather has very largely entered into the formation of the Englishman's mind, and the training of his sensibilities. It has made him responsive to changes in the environment, capable of meeting surprises of all kinds, both pleasant and unpleasant ... above all, it has made him observant of and susceptible to concrete details. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 101)

Chaudhuri uses climate to explain such exclusivity by stating that:

What divides the East from the West is neither Anglo-Saxon pride nor Hindu xenophobia. Both have indeed done their worst, but even they could not have made the division so unbridgeable without a contribution from something infinitely stronger, something which is absolutely basic to man's existence on earth – temperature. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 26)

A link is also made between the interior of the home and the English character: 'The interiors of the English houses, especially the great ones, also give evidence of the love of concrete details. They are in a way possible only in that climate and weather.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 102) In these descriptions, the Orient and Occident are again dialogically opposed; the social landscape and personalities are just given as evidence for these oppositions.

Orientalist motifs are constantly deployed and enforced and these allusions add to the idea of there being a deep chasm between the Orient and the Occident. Chaudhuri argues that these differences have embedded in Britain and India two completely different forms in which to conceive the world, again another classic Orientalist motif. The Orient and Occident are polarised when he states: 'we see the world as it dictates our way of seeing, we in the East in one, a *rarefied* way, and they in the West in another, a *concrete* way.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 24) Nirad Chaudhuri actually goes one step further than classic Orientalists such as Reginald Heber, who recognised the distinctions between the Orient and Occident, but actively believed in India's potential to be reformed along Western (modern) and Christian conventions. Chaudhuri denies the possibility for wholesale integration to ever manifest itself between the East and West. 'I am more convinced than ever that there can be no understanding between Indians and Europeans.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 91) Nirad C. Chaudhuri in his travelogue exhibits a typical

Orientalist sensibility. It is a reversal at first in the sense that he is an Indian writing about England:

The permanent face of India and the permanent face of England are different, they wear different looks. Time has made the face of my country stark, chastened, and sad, and it remains so in spite of the lipstick that is being put on it by the hand of the spiritual half-castes. The face of England remains smiling. When I was in England I felt this contrast, as well as the timelessness. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 7)

Chaudhuri's work has traditionally been encased within this dialectic of Anglo-centrism. Although his Anglocentrism is undeniable, I would argue that genuine scope for reverse Orientalism is present in his work and especially his later literary publications such as *Why I Mourn for England* (1996) and *The East Is East and the West Is West* (1998). England too is Orientalised, and his critical eye gradually becomes focused onto the imperial centre after its fall.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri, in Indian literary circles, has traditionally been viewed in sceptical terms, both in regards to his Anglo-centrism and his apparent inability to critique the England of his imagination. M.K. Naik has argued that 'the England Chaudhuri sees and loves is not so much modern England, but an ante-bellum, nineteenth century England, of which he has been a devoted admirer all his life.'¹⁷⁷ Even Chaudhuri himself was aware of the stigma attached to his outlook and the labelling of his work as anti-Indian. Chaudhuri acknowledges that he was perceived as an intense Anglophile: 'I was even called pro-British, which is one of the worst terms of abuse in contemporary India.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 1) Naik, commenting on this stereotype, stresses that Chaudhuri deliberately concocts polarising opinions that accord with Orientalist dialogisms of East and West:

His thinking is time and again vitiated by extreme positions, blind prejudices, half-truths and sheer sophistry. At his worst, he appears to have an axe to grind, not an implement to open up new paths of thought; at his best even

when he may not enlighten the reader, Chaudhuri can certainly provoke, tease and dazzle him. (M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature*, 270)

Chaudhuri certainly provokes the Indian reader when he claims that Indians are more materially motivated than English people, because they ‘are ready to do anything provided it gives ... [them] wealth, security, worldly position, and power, which mingle as inducements in differing proportions with different persons.’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 135) An overt Orientalist sensibility is displayed in his delineation of India as worn and sad and in need of civilising. However, by undertaking a closer reading of the text one can view in Chaudhuri’s art, elements of subversion and critique towards English rule, civility and modernity. Thus his Anglo-centric stereotype can at least begin to be challenged and dismantled.

In this respect, I would stress that Chaudhuri’s outlook is cosmopolitan not just in its Western sense, but where the term is understood as a ‘fundamental devotion to the interests of humanity as a whole ... [that eschews] detachment from the bonds, commitments and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation bound lives.’¹⁷⁸ Bruce Robbins has stressed that ‘cosmopolitanisms are now plural and particular. Like nations, they are both European and non-European...’ (Robbins, ‘Actually existing Cosmopolitanism,’ 2) Pallavi Rastogi has labelled Chaudhuri’s conception of cosmopolitanism as cosmo-cosmopolitanism which allows him to conjure ‘a fantastic England removed from grim everydayness, inverting the classic tropes of Orientalism by imposing them onto England instead, and displaying an attitude towards England that, despite its Anglophilia, is suffused with irony, anxiety, apprehension, and ambivalence.’¹⁷⁹ (Rastogi, ‘Timeless England Will Remain Hanging in the Air,’ 327) K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar has further opened up

subversive possibilities in his literary and critical eye. He argues that Chaudhuri exhibits a double identity as both an Anglophile and as an Indian:

The truth about him seems to be that he is at once more Indian than most Indians and more English than many Englishmen. With this double edge of sensitivity he achieves insights denied to most, but he also isolates himself from the crowd. Hence his solitariness, and the strength – and the weakness – arising therefrom.¹⁸⁰

When Chaudhuri's work is viewed in these terms one can glimpse an enabling vision that opens the corridors for a reverse Orientalist critique of Britain that has hitherto been viewed as absent in his work. The idea that he views the East and West as mutually exclusive is tempered in his appraisal of London as a metropole that 'has absorbed all its past, near and distant, in its present.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 65) Thus he acknowledges the possibility for different ethnic groups to integrate into London which acts as a surrogate for British society as a whole.

As an Anglophile, Chaudhuri is not afraid to express his dissatisfaction at the way Indians were treated by what he viewed as a boorish and intolerant ruling class in British India. Chaudhuri criticises the treatment and Orientalist attitude of Anglo administrators who: 'as a rule treated us [Indians] with authoritarian solicitude mixed with a certain amount of condescension, but sometimes also with icy snobbishness, and occasionally even with loud and berserker bad temper.' (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 123) William Walsh has commented on this fissure in his Anglophilia: 'it was of course England and the English civilization, it should be stressed, which influenced Chaudhuri, not the English in India. He was the last person alive to be impressed with colonial insolence.' (Walsh, *Readings in Commonwealth Literature*, 34) I have taken this idea one step further by first highlighting that Chaudhuri

actually begins to question the extent of Westernisation in India, and its potential for transformation in a positive sense:

I was a believer in the accepted doctrine of the synthesis of the best in the East and the West, which of course meant substantial Westernization. Doubts, however, entered my mind as soon as I began to meet Occidentals in India ... by that time I had also seen the relapse of almost all my contemporaries into Hindu traditionalism of one kind or another. This gave me a warning of the superficiality of Westernization. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 25)

When these scopes for subversion are allowed to be opened up, one can view Chaudhuri as a critic of certain elements of “Westernisation” in England too.

One major element of this critique was the sexuality that he found abundant in British society. Sexualising the foreign terrain in a travelogue was a major trope of conventional Orientalism. However, for Chaudhuri the analytical gaze is trained on the West and compared negatively to the East (India). To begin with, Western fashion and sartorial disposition are critiqued as unnecessarily sexualised:

I am sure that the ladies of the West will forgive an Oriental’s insensitiveness to their fury and somewhat otter-like elegance if I tell them that many of us do not see any beauty in a leopard or a tiger, regarding both only as very strong and ferocious beasts. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 77)

At one particular juncture in *A Passage to England*, Chaudhuri overtly recoils from Western sexuality: ‘I did not stay long enough in the West to be able to extend my zoological sensitiveness to the human species, more especially to its female.’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 77) As opposed to eroticising Western women in the way classic Orientalists were prone to do in the Orient, Chaudhuri’s erotic gaze is more insular and eclectic and not trained on Western women. He confirms ‘all that I know is this: there are many forms of the erotic.’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 79) The sexuality of Western society is seen as profuse and excessive:

I also saw that love-making was an easily observable activity. In fact, it was going on everywhere and at all times. I have seen young people falling on one another, crying, and kissing on a studded pedestrian crossing in a wide Paris thoroughfare, thundering with motor traffic. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 117)

Nirad C. Chaudhuri in the travelogue further critiques the materialism of Western culture in Britain, viewing it as a corrosive element at the heart of society and especially the family unit. Money and its value are excessively lauded: ‘there is no other country in the world today in which the tribe of pundits called economists are held in greater honour.’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 106) As a consequence daily social encounters in England between strangers are less cordial and warm than in India: ‘it is this *comédie humaine*, this large-hearted wiping out of the distinction between public and private affairs, this craving for sympathy in widest commonalty spread, that makes us recoil from the dreariness of the public behaviour of the English people.’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 86) Materialism of culture in Chaudhuri’s opinion has wrought a negative influence on the family unit (specifically parental control). He points to an exchange with his own son in England as evidence. ‘My son who is at an English university and lives among English people, began to acquire this negative attitude very early, and in reply to various suggestions made by us often wrote back, “it’s *not done* here.”’ (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 88) In his appraisal of marital life, Chaudhuri defends the arranged system of marriage against Western notions of its backwardness:

We are often told by our Western friends that they just cannot understand our system of marriage. Most of us do not understand theirs either. In any case, countless millions have found happiness in our system, and it is not to be spoken of lightly. (Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, 120)

English conceptions of marriage are circumvented and presented in need of help from the East (India). The following section is going to further expand Chaudhuri's Anglo-centric critique of the timeless England that he had come to idolise as an adolescent and to question as he grew older.

The Anglo-Centric Critique

The two latest texts in Nirad Chaudhuri's considerable literary canon were published in the 1990s after being compiled and edited by his son Dhruva N. Chaudhuri. Both texts are a compilation of articles and essays on the East-West relationship, India and Britain in particular. Articles appeared on both sides of the East/West divide in papers such as *The Times of India*, *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, *The Statesman* and *The Daily Telegraph*. In the first collection, *The East is East and West is West* (1996), articles have been collated from 1926 to 1994. In the subsequent compilation, *Why I Mourn for England* (1998), the chronological range of articles is far more recent, although the oldest composition dates back to 1946. In both collections, Chaudhuri's articles are collected in a manner that critiques everything from the English language in India, Indian politics, cultural development and communalism. However, the focus for this piece is the consistent manner in which Chaudhuri's analytical and critical eye is trained upon Britain, its reaction to post-war geopolitics and the fall of Empire. Chaudhuri acknowledges his Anglophilia but also that his critique of British culture has generally evoked surprise and neglect:

In India, I have been regarded as a slavishly pro-British man. For the admiration of English life and civilisation to which my *Passage to England* gave expression, I was described as a dog wagging its tail in a widely circulated Indian journal. So, my screeds on present-day England must have given rise to surprise among fellow Indians.¹⁸¹

Most of all the articles can be viewed as treatises on the changes that modernity has wrought on English economic, social and political life. Orientalist 'textual attitudes' are retrained onto the British landscape where its civilisation is the one in need of saving and restructuring. Chaudhuri actually posits an archetypal Orientalist paradigm when he questions in August 1980:

Why should it be left to me, an outsider, to feel the anger which they should show? It seems to me that civilisation in Britain, in spite of being massive, is now only a massive survival. Perhaps it will not be long before it is wholly in ruins. (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 92)

As I will show in the following paragraphs Chaudhuri rises to the challenge that he sets himself.

In *The East is East and West is West*, Chaudhuri criticises the influence of Orientalist texts on the Anglicised intelligentsia of India who were composing textbooks on Indian political, economic, social and cultural life. He attacks Orientalism directly when he states: ‘Anglicized Indians exhibit yet another side of their mental servility in their addiction to books on India by British or American authors, however false or worthless.’ (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 65) This he attributes to an imperial hangover ‘they have inherited from their fathers who served the British. Political independence has not liberated them from their psychological servitude.’ (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 63) Chaudhuri also ironically criticises the anglicisation of Indians; a label that he himself was burdened with for the majority of his literary career and life: ‘I cannot help regarding the collective personality of Anglicized Indians as anything but totally evil.’ (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 63) These exclamations further highlight the disjuncture between Chaudhuri’s position as a purely Anglo-centric writer and his position as an expatriate Indian who had sought England as a sanctuary to satisfy his cultural, political and social needs. I would argue that in his writings Chaudhuri continued to showcase a critical eye towards Britain and its attitude abroad pre- and post- Empire, a legacy that has historically been presumed as absent.

Chaudhuri exhibits what I have termed a reverse Orientalist sensibility by the manner in which he encases British society and civilisation in a rubric of danger and collapse. First, he is scathing about the perceived dilution of Western culture and opinion. 'In plain words, after watching life in Britain for ten years, I have come to the conclusion that there is no longer any sanity in collective English opinions and behaviour.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 76) British journalism in particular, is also held up as an example of this dilution of intellectual culture: 'British journalists nowadays are so uneducated as a class, that I am more inclined to think that it is due to ignorance and national demoralization.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 110) Within this rubric, Chaudhuri forwards a thesis outlining a distinct fissure in English society, a duality:

To have written about England as I have done and will do, can never be any kind of recantation, for what I am denouncing is a barbarism which is threatening the very life and civilisation I have admired. No believer in civilisation is allowed to forget that there are two Englands today, one of civilised men and women and another of unspeakable savages. (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 90)

The two Englands that he refers to and is perhaps reluctant to admit to are the timeless England of his imagination and the modern England he encounters. Here Chaudhuri's conception of Englishness becomes a duality, fluctuating between its connection to the Empire and its modern distance from that.¹⁸² However, this disjuncture is the grounds on which his Orientalist gaze is reversed. England becomes the dangerous, unrestrained and licentious terrain: 'the sorry tale would become endless if I were to relate the incidents of burglary, shoplifting, and vandalism perpetrated by ordinary English folk, once noted for their honesty.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 91) Again, this comment is reported in August 1980.

Chaudhuri reverses Orientalist sexual tropes. It is the Western body politic that is libidinous and unrestrained. A corrosion that is acidic to British civility and wrought with danger: 'as a result, revolting sexual crimes have become daily occurrences in Britain. Young women are not only being raped but also murdered, and the police are warning them against going out after dark.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 70) The erosion of the family unit is held up as one example of this moral dilution that has taken root in the West, a reversal of Orientalist erotic schemata: 'the contemporary revolt against motherhood is more matter of fact. It simply means having unrestricted sexual intercourse without pregnancy.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 82) Abortion, its relative ease, and the lack of stigma attached to such an act, also come under Chaudhuri's critical gaze. He chides 'the economic argument for abortion [that] is put forward with a pretence of rationality. But not so the emotional resistance.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 83) In this respect, English propriety and sexuality are compared unfavourably with social conventions in India: 'I suppose many women in India would prefer four lakhs of rupees to sexual intercourse at the age of 54. But here they want both sexual intercourse and money.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 84) Here the Orientalist dynamic of erotica is ostensibly reversed: 'the corollary, of course, is that the British people today are not so much immoral as antibiological.' (Chaudhuri, *The East is East and West is West*, 26) English society is Orientalised in the respect that sexuality that is frowned upon in India is not only prevalent but also indulged and tolerated in England.

Amit Chaudhuri has conceded that Chaudhuri was an Anglophile but stresses that he felt increasingly uncomfortable with its role in the world post-Empire. Nirad C. Chaudhuri never really did what he appealed for Indian settlers in Britain to do

and that was to assimilate totally into British culture because it was not what he imagined Britain to be. Chaudhuri settled permanently in England ‘when he was 73 years old, living a suburban life with his wife ... in North Oxford. But he was never happy with a Britain that had lost its Empire and become a satellite of America.’ (Amit Chaudhuri, ‘Poles of Recovery,’ 103) Furthermore, Chaudhuri expands his critique of English social civility, arguing that modernity was at the root of social problems in post-war England:

The public aspects of decline are tacitly admitted. There is a resignation to the loss of power and wealth. There is a startling acceptance of brutishness and incivility. But there does not seem to be even a suspicion that decay may also have penetrated the English mind, although no external decadence can come about without inner decadence having set in.¹⁸³

Modern technologies in particular are decried as the mitigating factors behind an intellectual and cultural dilution where engagements in art, politics and culture are replaced by vacuous luxuries:

Contraction of the mind is not the worst part of the decadence in England. What is more ominous is that as the mind is contracting the sense of emptiness within it is increasing. The emptiness is made visible to me by the number of young people I see roaming the city of Oxford ... with headphones over their ears. (Chaudhuri, *Why I Mourn for England*, 18)

The timeless England of his imagination which is catalogued so enthusiastically in his travelogue becomes diluted over time:

This timeless England lives on, and nowhere could I feel its presence more strongly than in the village on the edge of a hill where I am writing this. But three more visits, each longer than the preceding one, have also brought me face to face with contemporary British life. (Chaudhuri, *Why I Mourn for England*, 19)

Chaudhuri repositions England as the Orient. It is the social landscape that needs changing and represents a potentially destructive presence for the East: ‘the simple truth is that the Europeans have become the most committed theorists and

practitioners of political hatred, and are even exporting it to non-Europeans ... this validates the East's hatred, besides weakening the West's position.' (Chaudhuri, *Why I Mourn for England*, 38) His eventual settlement in England has traditionally been viewed as a rejection of India in part due to Orientalist epistemologies and East/West frameworks that had distanced him from his homeland. However, such a conclusion overlooks the manner in which he also critiques Britain. His settlement becomes a symbol for him to act as a regenerative presence in British society, a microcosm of the effect Indians could have on the body politic of English civilisation.

Nirad Chaudhuri positions himself as a hybrid post-colonial figure in England; he also rejects any labels that would place him as an outsider: 'although I have now lived for 18 years in England and have not revisited India even once. I totally reject the status of immigrant.' (Chaudhuri, *Why I Mourn for England*, 110) He assumes an Orientalist voice in his call for post-colonial Britain to reconnect with its colonial social heritage. In response to a question as to why he moved to England, Chaudhuri retorts:

In order to show Englishmen how their fathers dressed, how their fathers ate and drank, and how their fathers wrote English ... I have the traditional English manner. The misuse of English would make me feel that I was actually trying to teach the Englishmen their language. (Chaudhuri, *Why I Mourn for England*, 110)

Ruvani Ranasinha has noted this drive in Chaudhuri for literary assimilation, he felt: 'there should be no linguistic contamination in the writing of the bilingual writer, he rejects all modes of integration based on hybrid mixtures, and instead promotes assimilation into the home culture.' (Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers*, 77-8) In this call for assimilation, he in essence assumes the mission of the archetypal Orientalist. By moving Chaudhuri's literary logic further to include social aspects, the reluctance

he views in British people to re-engage with colonial historical strengths, such as personal manners, civility, and temperance, strike him as an inability to understand what allowed Britain to thrive during the Empire. In summary, Chaudhuri not only complicates our understanding of the Orientalist, he problematises the term post-colonial:

[He pushes] its constitutive parameters to include not just opposition to colonialism but also the simultaneity of collaboration and resistance that characterizes writers who lived half their life in the shadow of colonialism and the other half in the heat of post-coloniality. (Rastogi, 'Timeless England Will Remain Hanging in the Air,' 333)

In the next section, I will be analysing Mulk Raj Anand who challenged the Orientalist and intellectual elite in Britain during the inter-war period.

Mulk Raj Anand – The Inter-War Social Radical

Mulk Raj Anand is widely credited with being one of the three founding fathers of the Indian novel in English, the others being R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao.¹⁸⁴ He was born on the 12th of December 1905 in Peshawar in what was then pre-partition Punjab. Anand was born into the Kshatriya (warriors) caste which was viewed as the second highest of the regional caste stratification. His family were traditionally coppersmiths but his father Lal Chand had joined the military and was eventually to become head clerk in the 3rd Dogras regiment of the British-Indian army. The mother, Ishwar Kaur, was a peasant girl who had been brought up within a religious tradition that encompassed the wide variety of faiths in Punjab at the time: including Sikhism, Sufism and Hinduism. Together they were to have five sons (Mulk Raj Anand being the third), four of whom survived. In moving away from the traditional occupations of their caste, Anand's family allowed him an alternative route to maturation than the one that was traditionally offered to people of his kind. His father was a staunch advocate of Western education and thus sowed the seeds for the literary career in English that was to be Anand's lifelong passion.

The two writers that I deal with in this chapter had a variety of reasons for coming to Britain; Chaudhuri stayed and settled whilst Mulk Raj Anand returned to India after his period of studying at both Harrow and Cambridge. Anand was educated in cantonment schools in Punjab and followed this up by enrolling at Khalsa College in Amritsar to study for a degree which he obtained with honours in 1925. This scholarly success enabled him to enrol for a PhD at University College London to study philosophy, a path that also encompassed a period of study at Cambridge. In moving abroad, Anand alienated his father who had urged his son not

to break caste restrictions on overseas travel, an ultimatum that was instrumental in infusing within Anand a radical and revolutionary zeal that typified his politics and literary career. Suresht Renjen Bald corroborates this argument by stating that much of Anand's politics were engendered by his familial experiences. 'Elitism, paternalism, industrialism, and collectivism form the components of Mulk Raj's revolutionary politics. His personal revolt arose partly from the need he felt for individual expression, impossible in the world of his father and his caste.'¹⁸⁵

In placing Mulk Raj Anand's literary legacy within a radical tradition one first has to locate his motivations that were to propel his politics towards revolutionary socialism and Marxism. A family tragedy had seen his aunt commit suicide after being ostracised by her family for having the temerity to share a meal with a Muslim woman. This was to leave an indelible imprint on the psyche of Anand as he placed the blame for this tragedy squarely onto the rigidity of the caste system. Anand's first literary article was a response to this suicide and thus engendered within him an urge for social change within India. Any investigation of Anand's place within the thirties movement of social radicalism in London, needs to be understood against these experiences. His place within the inter-war modernist and literary movements was rooted in the Orient as much as it was infused by his study of the Empiricists (such as John Locke) at university and the literary figures of the Bloomsbury circle that dominated cultural output at the time. Anand's Marxist philosophy, radical and nationalist politics and his desire for a universal humanism rest outside of Orientalist dialogisms, as they were formed through a fusion of Eastern knowledges and Western teleology. This amalgamation questions the nexus of East as student and West as teacher.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that Anand was not just a proponent for freedom within India, a follower of Gandhi/Nehru and a member of the nationalist movement in India. This would indicate that his interests were purely designed for a social and political revolution within India. I would stress that such a conception reduces the scope of Anand's work and limits his position as a cultural critic on the Orient and the Occident's role within it. Anand was active within British cultural, literary and political circles within Britain from his time beginning in 1925 to the point at which he returned permanently to India in 1946. In this inter-war period, geopolitics around the world were either indelibly changed or beginning to change. Imperial challenges around the world were replaced by the internal conflicts that raged within the Occident that resulted in two World Wars. Post-colonial and postmodern critics should argue that his critical canon as a reverse Orientalist literary legacy has been denied its place as a critique of the Occident in the West and its presence in India. The first part of the argument focuses on one particular text in Anand's celebrated Lalu trilogy. First published in 1940, *Across the Black Waters* (2000) sees the novel's protagonists leave India and come to Europe as part of the war effort against Germany in World War I.

Mulk Raj Anand is the first writer that I have incorporated into my readings who was principally a novelist. However, the majority of his work was both centred in India and pitched against the falling days of imperialism and Orientalist hegemony within it. Anand's, *Across the Black Waters*, is the only novel in his literary canon where he explicitly uproots its narrative focus and places it at the heart of the Western world at its time of crisis and internal conflict. The use of this text runs counter to the methodology I have outlined prior to this chapter because it analyses a fictional text as opposed to the non-fictional mediums of autobiography, memoirs,

letters and personal diaries that have been examined thus far. The purpose of this analysis is to introduce Anand's views of Europe that were registered initially in his fiction. To deal with *Conversations in Bloomsbury* as a reverse Orientalist account of Western society, culture and intellectual thought, I feel it is necessary to give Anand's narrative outlook some brief context as the discursive strategies employed in his earlier novels (with particular reference to *Across the Black Waters* in this discussion) are to a degree utilised in his subsequent dialogues with the literary elite in Britain. His nationalist politics, Marxism, humanism and egalitarian ideals are opened up and set against a European backdrop: a context that initially motivated his migration to Britain, his subsequent recollections of his presence there and the conflict which his world views and outlook aroused in the imperial metropole.

K.D. Verma has stated that Anand was a modernist whose work was heavily influenced by Western thought and the enlightenment. He responded to the world around him with the tools that were provided for him with his education and upbringing. His modernism:

[Was] deeply rooted in the European intellectual tradition, his social and political thought is traceable to the eighteenth-century philosophy, especially the ideas of Locke, Rousseau, Hume and Kant, the romantic movement, the British socialist tradition, modern political and economic ideologies and the overwhelming responses to the two world wars.¹⁸⁶

As I will demonstrate later, Anand did not condone British imperialism and the colonial system in the manner of Nirad Chaudhuri, instead he fixed onto its exploitation. However, his novels and philosophy were not constricted by this element in his thinking. He 'may be accused of sentimentalism, but his libertarianism, egalitarianism, anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, cosmopolitanism and universalism have a much broader philosophical base.' (Verma, *The Indian*

Imagination, 84) The West was also critiqued from within, where the pretensions of Orientalist superiority were challenged at the heart of the imperial system and at the heart of Western literary debates.

This challenge, present in Anand's fiction and non-fiction, has until now been either hastily covered or neglected completely. Kristin Bluemel attributes this factor to the patronage Anand received from the Bloomsbury group. 'This categorization is encouraged by Anand's connections with several of Bloomsbury's foremost writers: in addition to Forster he was supported by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, and Edith Sitwell.'¹⁸⁷ Historically Anand's subversive potential has been overlooked because during that period his literature was viewed within a context that focused solely on India. The idea that Anand's work was also aimed at the inequities of the imperial system has been confused with his fight against the social inequities of the caste system. *Across the Black Waters* demonstrates that Anand was keen to reroute these critiques of the Orient and aim them at the heart of the Occident which he viewed had capitalised on the social ills resident in India as opposed to attempting to correct them. The internal divisions and conflicts that characterised the two World Wars are the focus of the text that primarily centres on the effects of such events on the Indian soldiers who are sent to fight in them. However, the focus of my analysis will be on the manner in which the West (as a civilisation) was critiqued by Anand through the traumatic nature of the soldier's experiences as the text was the only fictive piece that centres on Europe in his literary canon. As a consequence, his critique of the civilised West is negatively influenced by the tragic events on the war front.

In giving a realistic depiction of World War I, Anand assumes the right in which to render intelligible the West to the East (reverse Orientalism) but also crucially back to the West itself. In adopting realism as the narrative form for his text Anand wrote against the grain in regards to the Bloomsbury group in which he was involved:

I realized in the face of India's poor, I might have to go beyond literature as defined in Bloomsbury, to new writings from vital experience. It was possible that this literature may not become the literature of pleasure of the West, but may be the literature of reality.¹⁸⁸

Jessica Berman argues that this desire in Anand's work does not reflect a total rejection of modernist technique and style. She links his anti-colonial sensibility with the work of James Joyce whose own writing co-mingled experimental prose with social politics. This 'connection asks us to rework and redefine our understanding of engaged writing [and Western modernism].' (Berman, 'Comparative Colonialisms,' 466) Berman places Anand's form of modernism, exhibited in his novels, in counterpoint to that of Bloomsbury modernists such as Lawrence, Eliot, and Woolf: 'experimental fiction has often been described as separate from engaged writing, with modernism being distinguished from the more directly political work often dubbed "thirties literature.'" (Berman, 'Comparative Colonialisms,' 466) Consequently, Anand's complex engagement with modernism in literary London discursively demonstrates a form of resistance to the narrative and artistic concerns of Bloomsbury that tacitly endorsed the status quo of colonialism.

Susheila Nasta frames Anand's form of modernism as hybrid and transnational:

For whilst Anand was often to declare a utopian affirmation of Western modernity during his period as a young colonial student in Bloomsbury, his relationship with European enlightenment thinking had always been

problematic. It is perhaps owing to the complexity of such contradictions that his work can now be seen to have laid the ground for a split and transnational vision of modernity, a modernity that could straddle the worlds of both 'Bloomsbury' and 'Gandhi.'¹⁸⁹

Here, 'Bloomsbury' and 'Gandhi' can be read to signify the Orientalist divide and how Anand's hybrid literary modernism constitutes a form of reverse Orientalism that complicates designations of India as anti-modern during this period. It also expands our conceptions of Western modernity and modernism. By reading Anand within a transnational spirit his work can be viewed 'as a constitutive part of modernism, thus helping to realign modernism along global lines.' (Berman, 'Comparative Colonialisms,' 467)

In order to develop this realignment of modernism further, with reference to Anand's work, requires a willingness to recognise that 'art loses nothing in engagement. On the contrary ... the always new requirements of the social and metaphysical engage the artist in finding a new language and new techniques.' (Nasta, 'Between Bloomsbury and Gandhi,' 156) *Across the Black Waters* 'signals his awareness of the need to move beyond the prescriptions of any one orthodoxy, any one tradition.' (Nasta, 'Between Bloomsbury and Gandhi,' 156) It also allows me to position Anand as a reverse Orientalist who thinks past British colonial epistemologies, which require a clear distinction between East and West. Here, I juxtapose the two by blurring the distinction between Western modernism (Bloomsbury) and the colonised Indian (Anand) who engages with it. Moreover, Anand's modernist technique and academic credentials justify his place in Bloomsbury; this may seem collusive, but his anti-colonial sensibility, conveyed in his social realistic language and concerns, actually registers resistance to the dominant order. This theoretically distinguishes him (colonised) from Bloomsbury

(coloniser) as they are shown in the following section to only think and write within a European modernist tradition.

In applying Anand's social realism to Orientalist epistemologies, the implicit suggestion is that Orientalism was not grounded in reality and he would agree with Said's summation that the Orient was created primarily as a fiction for the Western imagination. In his other novels, the India of the imagination is dismantled. 'Anand's India is not the India of immemorial past ... it is the India of the present.'¹⁹⁰ Thus, his work characterises the wish to ostracise both India and Europe from Orientalist dictums, signalling a willingness to render visible the fictions that he believes have underpinned Orientalism and colonial definitions of India. Anand wrote in English and wrote for a global audience that encompassed both sides of the East/West divide.

In chronicling the War, Anand is demonstrating one of the first literary attempts by an Indian to make sense of cataclysmic historical events that again affected people on a global stage. Kristin Bluemel has insightfully argued that the text plays a double role in its function. '*Across the Black Waters* looks both ways: it memorialises the Indian Sepoys who helped maintain the British Empire during World War One, and anticipates their liberation through a post World War Two negotiated freedom.'¹⁹¹ The text also gives voice to the experiences of Indians during the war that have been historically neglected in the West. Anand's fictive chronicle serves as a comprehensive objection to the historical and literary strand of thinking that eschewed politics. 'He takes a clear stance and denounces the dictum "Art is for Art's sake" and is not scared of being dubbed a propagandist.' (Kumar, *Conceptualizing Tradition*, 149) Anand's oeuvre always demonstrates a willingness to

challenge the social and political status quo. His analysis of the war front in Europe challenges documentations of it that have obscured the Oriental presence there.

The primary example of the way Anand reverses the Orientalist paradigm is the form in which the European is crafted as the Other and European terrain is depicted as harsh, alien and threatening. Initially, the Europe in the text is the one of Lalu's imagination crafted by imperialism:

He was going to *Vilayat* after all, England, the glamorous land of his dreams, where the sahibs came from, where people wore coats and pantaloons and led active, fashionable lives – even, so it was said, the peasants and the poor sahibs. (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 67-68)

The reality he faces is somewhat different. Uncle Kirpu cautions later in the text that 'there are no diamonds studded in that harbour ... nor is *Vilayat* studded with rubies.' (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 9) The brutal spectacle of the war frontier also undermines the conception of the European as superior; whose civility distinguished them from the Orient. Anand writes that:

'The wild men of the European jungles,' built up in the sepoys' minds by the Sarkar ... [was confirmed by] the sight of the tall, ruddy, grey-uniformed Germans, with queer helmets, dashing forward with the ferocity of bold animals, [a sight which] fascinated them [and] held them spellbound for long moments in a curiosity mixed with terror. (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 225-26)

In this description of the German soldiers, Anand deploys much of the imagery the Oriental native was historically associated with and uses those images to describe the soldiers in a European context.

Strategically, Anand's use of language can be viewed as a form of linguistic reverse Orientalism. He disorientates his Western reader by employing Indian words in his descriptions of, and relations between, the different soldiers and battalions in the British army. Bluemel expounds that 'the novel's dislocated, disorienting language encourages readers to move between different languages and literacies

(Lalu, Owen Sahib, the narrator) presenting opportunities for multiple connotations and disorientation.’ (Kristin Bluemel, ‘Casualty of War,’ 321) Anand himself has labelled his construction of Indo-Anglian language as ‘pidgin English.’ This is like Creole in its faithfulness to the forms in which Oriental natives (Indians) communicate in English and also evades complete mimicry. A major exhibition of this challenge to Western readers is the way in which British military ranks are ‘Indianised’ continuously in the text; Lieutenant becomes ‘Laften’ and Colonel becomes ‘Karnel.’ Even England is referred to as ‘Englistan.’¹⁹²

Jessica Berman argues that Anand’s form of pidgin-English acts as a symbol of resistance to dominant discourses. ‘If the new “pigeon-English” of the Coolie or ... [Indian soldier] cannot be assimilated into either the standard English of Empire or the Hindi of a caste-conscious India, then it contains the possibility of resistance to both.’ (Berman, ‘Comparative Colonialisms,’ 482) To an extent, the English language in *Across the Black Waters* is Orientalised, and this demonstrates his ability to co-mingle the playfulness of modernist technique with the harsh political realities of his subject: ‘Thus, this use of language – of style, if you will – carries heavy political and social weight here. It belies the truism that engaged writing lacks interest in stylistics and that political novels tend toward stripped-down realism.’ (Berman, ‘Comparative Colonialisms,’ 482)

The message of the English commanding officer in English to Lalu is also tellingly fractured. Symbolically the general’s address to the soldiers acts as a surrogate for the increasing fracture of imperial control over its colonies:

So many campaigns... feared the strange surroundings... duty to fight... duty as soldiers... your commanding office... filled me with pride... suffering much, but... Loyalty to Empire... and King... your homes... shattered villages around us... law, liberty Europe... in India... long... Do not think... enemy... defeated... Empire not safe. Let everyman do his utmost duty until the enemy

is defeated... your duty... Empire... the glory of your deed... (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 192)

The narrative structure of the message is punctured by Anand to symbolise the form in which these Orientalist systems of knowledge were beginning to break down and be broken down by the Orient.

This dislocation is taken one step further by Anand in the manner in which Europe is consistently compared to India. It's a dialogism that leaves the Occident as insubstantial and inferior:

Everything is small in these parts ... look at their rivers – not bigger than our small *nullahs*. Their whole land can be crossed in a night's journey ... their rain is like the pissing of a child. And their storms are a mere breeze in the tall grass. (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 31)

British readers conditioned to the superiority of the West are then challenged by Orientalist typologies being reversed. The civilisation that had imposed imperial status upon him could not sustain the wholeness and unity that he thought was taken for granted in the Occident. Orientalism for Anand is punctuated before Lalu's very own eyes:

If he had been told even a fortnight ago that in *Vilayat*, the land of dreams, where he had been so happy and eager to come as on an adventure, the Sahibs, whom he admired so much, were wilfully destroying each other, ruining their villages and their cities, he would not have believed it. (Anand, *Across the Black Waters*, 129)

Vilayat is taken out of the imagination and placed into the real world. Anand offers an Indian depiction of the way in which global geopolitics were being disbanded and repositioned during, between and after the wars.

Challenging the Intellectual Elite

Mulk Raj Anand in *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981) depicts a series of encounters with the intellectual elite of the celebrated Bloomsbury circle between the two World Wars. These were based on actual encounters in the era but were narrated years later so fictive elements to these recollections need to be recognised. At the very beginning of the text, Anand declares his entrance into the heart of the literary and intellectual world of the imperial metropole:

I arrived in London after a brief jail-going in the Gandhi movement in the early twenties and found myself removed, suddenly, from the realities of the freedom struggle into the world of Bloomsbury where the pleasures of literature and art were considered ends in themselves. (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 5)

Anand's humanism and left-wing social politics left him fundamentally opposed to the idea of 'art for art's sake,' and thus further alienated him from this environment of intellectual elitism. His novels in particular were designed to highlight the inequalities inherent in society and thus declared a desire to overcome these inequities in a spirit of egalitarianism and transformation. *Conversations in Bloomsbury* underline this desire as Anand professes an urge to engage with this intellectual world as an equal:

I came from a world where everyone was hampered, where desires were frustrated, and happiness thwarted by the elders, who were all-important. And inside me was the longing to be free, to expand my consciousness, to live and to be on equal terms with the men of learning like those Professor Bonamy Dobrée was familiar with. (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 18)

Bloomsbury or the Bloomsbury group as it has come to be known was a collection of intellectuals who were connected, loosely or otherwise, by an elitist genealogy and privileged education. The area of Bloomsbury was also the home of

the University of London and various publishing houses, Faber and Gwyer being one in particular. Quentin Bell has attempted to give a biographical genesis and constitution for the Bloomsbury group:

Bloomsbury was begotten in Cambridge at the beginning of the century. To be more exact it started during the autumn of 1899. At that time student friendships and student societies brought most of the men in the group together. Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sydney Turner – all members of the ‘Apostles’ Society – met Thoby Stephen and Clive Bell at the midnight society; Desmond MacCarthy came earlier, Maynard Keynes later; Roger Fry had already left Cambridge and did not join the rest until 1910.¹⁹³

S. P. Rosenbaum in his extensive collection of Bloomsbury commentary, criticism and memoirs has elaborated that the Bloomsbury group was not just a group of individuals who connected in an intellectual environment as socialites but can be viewed as a specific cultural entity; a Bloomsbury ideal and ethic was identifiable in their creative and scholarly output:

The original and enduring basis of the Group was friendship. Because Bloomsbury cannot be said to have held any distinguishing principles in common, some critics have argued that one cannot talk of Bloomsbury’s ideas, beliefs, or tastes. But this is not so. The ideas, beliefs, and tastes of the various original members of Bloomsbury, though they were not held in common, nevertheless display that over-lapping and criss-crossing similarity that ... [can be] called a family resemblance.¹⁹⁴

In attempting to posit a reverse Orientalist position that Anand adopts, one has to outline a body of thought against which he reacts. The Bloomsbury group did have its internal fissures, however, a discernible unity was evident and this was none more evident in their collective attitudes toward the East: its art, culture, philosophy, religion and social mores.

D. H. Lawrence was an eminent literary contemporary of the Bloomsbury group; however, his membership of the intellectual circle has been open to debate over the years. He was at once a part of the literary establishment in the respect that

he was one of the foremost novelists and writers of the era. However, his literary, cultural and political outlook cast him as an outsider to the group in a variety of respects. Amit Chaudhuri has written that Lawrence's vision was anti-Bloomsbury in its assessment of cultural essentialism. 'Lawrence examines how culture, in its dominant form, defeats and silences smaller cultures, and homogenizes their differences into its own structure.'¹⁹⁵ This analysis can by proxy be viewed as anti-Orientalist; both in the manner in which it elucidates the relationship between knowledge and power and the awareness it displays of the universalising of the Other. Lawrence is viewed as being a reluctant participator in the connection between knowledge and power, a conceptual matrix that would have underpinned Bloomsbury. 'Lawrence was only too aware that, behind any "impartial" account of history, the poles of the culturally central and marginal are connected to each other by relations of power and dominance.' (Amit Chaudhuri, *D.H. Lawrence and Difference*, 131) Amit Chaudhuri casts Lawrence against the Bloomsbury group in almost Oriental terms, a contextual dialogism that Anand would have felt himself inhabiting. Chaudhuri expounds that 'in a manner remarkably akin to the methods of Orientalist scholarship, Lawrence's "difference" is held to be somehow mysteriously fixed and essential; no attempt is made to work towards a critical language that could address and describe that difference.' (Amit Chaudhuri, *D.H. Lawrence and Difference*, 116) The Orientalist need for definition is consciously resisted by Anand in his dialogues with Bloomsbury.

Anand alludes to the status of D.H. Lawrence as another outsider within the Bloomsbury circle, a position he intrinsically sympathises with. His desire to write novels that engaged with the social fractures and realities of the time are analogously compared to Lawrence's willingness to explore new ground that was considered

anathema to rubrics such as ‘art for art’s sake.’ Anand professes: ‘I want to give myself up to all those passions of the poet of the broken world ... Like the much despised outsider Lawrence lending himself to primitive emotions...’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 136) This link between the two writers is further expounded in a discussion with T. S. Eliot regarding the presence of female worship in Indian religious verse. Anand refrains from drawing a Western parallel to this valorisation of femininity when he reasons: ‘I was going to add in D.H. Lawrence’s praise of women, but I desisted for fear of mentioning an unmentionable name.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 131) Lawrence as an outsider to Bloomsbury circles, admires Hindu art and thought for its lack of formalism and structure; an implicit suggestion that he was uncomfortable with the dogmatic assumptions of the group who felt they had mastered the mystery of the East. Lawrence explains: ‘what I admire in the Hindus is their sense of mystery.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 23) Anand respects these counter cultural strains within Lawrence’s work when placed along the ‘family resemblance’ of Bloomsbury thought. He also recognised that Lawrence’s attitude towards Englishness and its derivative attachment to Orientalist thought allowed for rigid world views to be challenged and the ‘Englishness’ of Empire to be dismantled. David Gervais has also written that ‘Lawrence never identified his ‘England with the “nation” as a political unit. He came to think of it in increasingly visionary ways, transforming the usual regressive nostalgia with which his contemporaries thought of it.’¹⁹⁶ Anand also criticises the ‘literary England’ of Bloomsbury.

In discussion with Huxley, Anand criticises the drive to over formalise in Western intellectual culture, a critical device he views as plentiful within Bloomsbury circles. Lawrence incurs the wrath of his literary peers in his rendering

of feeling and emotion. His work can be viewed as anti-Orientalist in its refusal to be categorised:

Lawrence ... writes from an over-whelming diffusion of feeling ... [which] compels attention, in spite of overwriting. The Professor forgets that novels are not written on university campuses for students to write theses about. They are written from non-scholastic compulsions. A novel is glorified gossip. Not a lexicon. It is a free form... (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 35)

He again emphasises the multiplicity of creative processes that can be difficult to classify when he states: ‘It’s all very complex. There are different kinds of artistic expressions. And one cannot analyse the creative process easily.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 64) In stressing the need for a new form of novel writing within the circles of the imperial intelligentsia, Anand can be viewed as attempting to create not only a new literary India but also to influence the direction of literary Britain. Anand professes an anti-Orientalist sentiment in his approach to novel writing; a critical design that was aware of the multitudinousness of daily life, comfortable with resistance and the impossibility of absolute classifications. “My difficulty is that I want my novel to be a poetic whole, and still reflect the miscellaneous life of India, which is hugger mugger, kachar machar everywhere...” (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 87)

Mulk Raj Anand is always conscious of his difference within the Bloomsbury circle. He recalls: ‘I bent my head down ... I felt I was still self-conscious, because I knew there was, in Bloomsbury circles, an intellectual snobbery and I was still an outsider.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 85) Quentin Bell hints at the snobbishness and intellectual elitism that generated antipathy toward the Bloomsbury group within Britain itself at the time. ‘Members of Bloomsbury were accused of arrogance, of intellectual snobbery. But it was worse than that, they did

not need to be arrogant; they could afford *not* to be snobbish. They were accused of being exclusive...' (Bell, *Bloomsbury*, 85) This exclusivity within Bloomsbury thought lent itself towards cultural as well as intellectual elitism. Bell elaborates upon this elitist strain by stating that Bloomsbury had 'allowed Post-Impressionism to degenerate into something wholly frivolous and fashionable, that it acquiesced in a social system which it knew to be wrong and allowed itself to become a part of the Establishment.' (Bell, *Bloomsbury*, 102) Dimitri Mirsky, a contemporary of Bloomsbury, further expands upon the connection between the group, its intellectual thought and the colonial establishment. He states: 'the basic trait of Bloomsbury is a mixture of philosophic rationalism, political rationalism, aestheticism, and a cult of the individuality. Their radicalism is definitely bourgeois ... [borne of] the old bourgeois radicalism and utilitarianism.'¹⁹⁷ Thus, Anand in his reaction against Bloomsbury thought can be viewed as reacting against the British establishment, whose apogee was imperialism and the colonial dominion upon his native country.

Initially, Anand expresses unease at the Orientalist attitudes of the Bloomsbury group. He remembers: 'I had entered a world of conflicting personalities, involved in various ways of transcending dailiness. I was distressed that there were lurking prejudices in all of them about the East.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 23-24) Anand accepts these inclinations at first by suggesting that Orientalist certainties were widespread in the English mentality and not just within the intellectual elite: 'most Englishmen believed in the Pax Britannica. Many of them had not been East of Suez.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 15) In his entry to the Bloomsbury world, Anand cannot help but feel the weight of Orientalist attitudes that categorised the worthiness of his presence there as somewhat generous. Bonamy Dobrée characterises this faith in the civilising

zeal of the Empire when he comments ‘I admit ... I do believe in the regenerative role of some of our people out there ... after all we did help to abolish the burning of windows ... and you all speak such good English.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 12) Anand however, does not allow these sentiments to intimidate him and instead resolves to challenge these attitudes within those privileged intellectual circles. Anand and his friend Nikhil Sen demonstrate that they are not afraid to question the civilising motive of Pax Britannica. Bonamy Dobrée further defends imperialism when he states: ‘come, come, the British did give you roads - and justice!’¹⁹⁸ However, Nikhil Sen challenges these Orientalist assumptions by sardonically countering that they also ‘exploited us for more than a century.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 21-22)

Anand expresses surprise at the way Orientalism had distorted India in the eyes of these literary figures, whom he had hoped were able to view the inequalities, exploitation and inconsistencies of Orientalist logic. ‘I was too overwhelmed by the presence of these legendary literary men. I felt that they did not know very much about my country, and what they knew was through Kipling, or through superficial impressions.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 29) This surprise turns to anger when Anand proclaims:

[Apart from Aldous Huxley] all the others seemed to believe, more or less, in the “Empire on which the sun never sets.” I, who had been to jail in the Gandhi movement was fuming inside ... and I decided in my mind that I would fight for the freedom of my country forever, though I may admire these English writers for their literary skills. (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 29)

The encounters directly inspire a reverse Orientalist logic within Anand.

Joceylyn Stitt and Pallavi Rastogi in *Before Windrush* (2008) also stress a counter narrative purpose in Anand’s text: ‘both the book and identities carved in the

narrative suggest the fluidity of self-hood, the impossibility of absolute hermeneutic distinctions as well as the subtle ways in which powerless groups gain voice.’¹⁹⁹ The impossibility of static selfhood is compounded by the mutable nature of intersubjectivity where perceived collective agreements can be delicately challenged. Also, in composing his recollection of the conversations that might be divergent from the other participants, Anand alludes to the difficulties of placing hermeneutic seals upon people’s roles within society as well as historicising them.²⁰⁰ Each recollection that Anand commits to print is indelibly marked by his individual subsequent experiences and the prevailing ideology of the time and space in which he travels through and settles in. In making this claim, I aim to demonstrate that such conceptions of histories are distinct from Orientalist discursive reconstructions that are reliant on the prevailing orthodoxy of Western superiority and enunciation. By memorialising Bloomsbury from an Indian perspective, Anand illustrates that previously received historicisms which are viewed as singular and distinct from the Other can be challenged and deconstructed.

Tacit discursive reversals of Orientalist impositions are a showcase of Anand’s dialogues in the book, where his very presence in and subsequent composition of Bloomsburies, indicates his ability to both mould into and stand out from the Bloomsbury crowd. Anand can be framed variously as distinct from and a part of the Bloomsbury circle; membership is conceived of as fluid. His dialogues with Bloomsbury members are both subtly resistant and at times compliant with their cultural thought because he acknowledges the possibility of art and literature to both break down barriers as well as erect them. ‘I realised that the intelligentsia here was a race apart. In spite of the divide between East and West, some brave spirits were always knocking down the walls.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 41) This

willingness to acknowledge the fluidity of the Bloomsbury ideal allows for a reverse Orientalist construction of Britain that is distinct from the absolutism associated with Oriental culture, thought and practice in Western eyes.

Englishness is not just linked to the nation or the colonial project in the dialogues Anand has with Bloomsbury members; it is linked to civilisation, an Englishness cherished by Bloomsbury. Harry Tomkins roleplays from George Bernard Shaw's play *'John Bulls Other Island'* in a public bar with Anand and Bill Bland. "I see no evils in the world – except, of course, natural evils – that cannot be remedied by freedom, self government, and English institutions. I think so, not because I am an Englishman, but as a matter of commonsense..." (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 80) Englishness and imperialism are implicitly intertwined to the point of being indistinguishable. This acts as the ultimate Orientalist pretension and its underlining logic when under operation in a colony as significant as India. Leonard Woolf in one encounter exhibits classic Orientalist assumptions about India whilst also uttering the ultimate Orientalist objective; that of giving the Orient its own history back. Woolf reasons that: 'the Indians are sometimes demanding. Then abject. And they all long for – re-immersion in the Ganges ... Back to their past. Given to them by Max Mueller and Mrs. Besant.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 75) As an eminent member of the Bloomsbury group, Woolf vocalises what Said has noted as the Orientalist's need to define and reconstruct the Orient; for it was incapable of doing it on its own and as a consequence required intervention.

Anand challenges the Orientalist discourse of a backward and incapable India. His exchanges with T.S. Eliot in the memoir are particularly framed within

this paradigm. The interactions between Anand and Eliot are almost circumscribed as the Orient versus the Occident. Eliot is admired for his art and poetry but his social and political views are challenged both subtly and overtly in a manner that never strays beyond a respectful dialogue.²⁰¹ In this failure to pronounce the respected Indian poet Mohamed Iqbal's name correctly, Anand feels that T.S. Eliot is failing to take the East seriously in its artistic, poetic and cultural merit.²⁰² He writes: 'my pride had made me rigid. I wanted to correct Mr. Eliot for mispronouncing Mohammad. The thwartings which had made me a rebel at home throbbed behind my head.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 22) T.S. Eliot undermines Anand's attempts to invoke the Muslim poet in a conversation about *The Waste Land* by stressing that there was 'not the same depth in Islam as in Hindu and Buddhist thought.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 19) Eliot emphasises this Orientalist attitude in more overt and unequivocal terms when he states that: 'Gandhi seems to be an anarchist ... Sometimes, I feel the Indians should pursue their culture and leave government to the British empiricists...' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 22) He ridicules the idea of Indians ruling themselves and thus reinforces the Orientalist motif that it was the role of the West to educate the East for its own benefit. When challenged by Anand, Eliot mediates his Orientalist logic by stating that the West could learn from the Orient but only under its control and not outside of it. The Empire is still viewed as a necessity. Eliot states: 'your atmosphere is highly charged. In many ways, I wish that the Indians would tone down their politics and renew their culture ... we might gain from India - if it remains in the Empire.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 150) However, Anand refutes these sentiments by turning the intellectual gaze back upon Eliot and his symbolic place as an exalted member of the Western episteme.

Eliot's suggestion that even eminent figures such as the Hindu philosopher Shankara were indebted to the West for inspiration causes Anand to recoil from Eliot's imposition of Occidental superiority. In response to Eliot's suggestion that Shankara's work was inspired by St. Thomas's journey to India, Anand remembers that there was 'a tremor down my spine at the insinuation that Shankara may have got grace from the Christians.' (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 131)

Exchanges between Anand and Eliot move onto concepts of being and how art's main aim should be to attempt to define such concepts of being that were set in stone at birth. Anand rejects Eliot's conception of essences and formalism that were propounded by the classic philosophers, as universally applicable to both East and West. Anand repudiates this Orientalist imposition:

I did not feel inclined to formalism. First of all, I did not think that the sense of harmony was inspired by God and was incipient in us already at birth. I wanted to start as *tabula rasa*, to assimilate, expand and formulate. I was reacting against Plato's essences, Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, as inborn in us. I felt that there was a thesis-anti-thesis in everything we said and a poem was the reconciliation of opposites. (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 131)

Opposed to this Western ideology, Anand views such conceptions as limiting and complacent; a charge that he also directs towards colonialism and the imperial system in general. He views such Orientalist materialisations as manifestly unimaginative and rigid because they needed to be so in order to sustain the logic of their power and presence in India. David Slater in his study *Geopolitics and the Post-colonial* (2004) has called for North/South (Orient/Occident) relations to be reconceptualised where openness to difference and localities can be accommodated within unitary geopolitics of thought. This 'means being open to learn from opposed interpretations [of thought] and accepting both the reality of the continuing diversity of knowledge, and the dynamic and contradictions that affect the individual

trajectories of specific authors.’²⁰³ Anand, in accordance with this idiom, propounds a thesis of constant dialogue, rigour and openness that allows creativity to spring forth. His very presence in Bloomsbury indicates such a hope for transformation.

Anand can be viewed as a reverse Orientalist because he challenges the intellectual elite within their own domain by using their own work against them; for example *The Waste Land*. On debating with T.S. Eliot, Anand admits to ‘itching all the time to have a confrontation with him about Western civilisation itself.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 144) Anand turns Eliot’s art against himself in a debate about the nationalist struggle in India: ‘I turned to Eliot and said: ‘You know, Sir, we have obeyed too long. Dissent is important, as it is in *The Waste Land*.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 46) Eliot’s world view, as indicated by his poetics, is employed by Anand to propound a reverse Orientalist logic that views the Empire as a waste land that needed to end for the West itself to be rejuvenated. The East could transform the West by ending its political order and not sustaining it as the intellectuals in Bloomsbury imagined:

I stopped because I felt I had said too much. I had come to learn not to teach Eliot, I reminded myself, though I had the irreprehensible urge in me, out of my own disillusionment with Europe, to show the concave mirror to the Western intellectuals, however eminent they be. Eliot had been publishing long articles about European resurgence by writers like Herr Robert Curtis, Father D’Arcy and himself in the *Criterion*. He should know that the Europe they were dreaming about was already a *Waste Land*. (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 151)

Anand also challenges Eliot’s ideas of being, belief and happiness in the East, stating that Indian aesthetics, expressions and instinct were traits of joy in the East. ‘I felt that there was no way for anyone to suggest to the divided self of Eliot that millions of people survived through sheer instinct. And that, beyond the worries of Western poets, there were moments of ecstasy as in the dances of the Beas Guru where my

uncle was swaying away like a Sufi Dervish.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 50)

Anand defends his native culture and people vigorously in the conversations he has in Bloomsbury, however, he is not only reactive in his exclamations. His critical gaze is also trained upon Britain; its social structure based upon class is not held up as distinct from the inequalities that he fought against for the majority of his life in India. The hierarchies of the class system are overtly compared to the caste system in India. ““Strange,” I said, “how the Cockneys and their wives, who are looked down upon here by their superiors, as our Brahmins look down on the untouchables, obey the upper classes.”” (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 39) Another parallel is drawn here with ‘Lawrence’s own experience of the English class system and the way each class tended to be a little England fenced off from the rest of England...’ (Gervais, *Literary Englands*, 76) Thus, the veneer of cultural superiority that is polished by the Bloomsbury group is questioned by Anand. In a subsequent conversation with Lytton Strachey, Anand provocatively questions the scope for intellectual and spiritual growth in an industrial age in the West: ‘I dared not tell him that I was depressed by the sight of how the English went to work every morning and came back tired every evening. I felt that brooding was not possible under those conditions.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 127) Orientalist ‘concerns’ for foreign civilisations are mimed here by Anand, and it is British society that is placed under the microscope.

In conversation with Clive Bell, Anand further enhances his disagreement with the universalism of Western thought. ‘I was inclined more and more towards concrete realities and did not wish to generalise my feelings into universal

significance. I did not want to utter sentiments. I sat back. I decided I would keep silent.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 105) Localities need to be understood and read in their own environments; the Orient was not a monolithic entity that needed ordering by another universal entity (the Occident). Homi Bhabha has theorised that cultures cannot be understood as total or unitary forms: ‘nor simply dualistic in relation of Self to Other.’²⁰⁴ Anand adopts a similar position in his refusal to be defined as the Other within a universal conception of Western culture. His position within it was constantly in flux. In dialogue with his friend Nikhil Sen, Anand can be viewed to challenge Western views on art and how this accorded with reality: ‘how many people really absorb works of art and how many merely look at them. I must distinguish between *looking* and *seeing*. I felt my face flushed with the inspiration that had come to me.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 63) This can be viewed as a subtle denigration of the presumptions of knowledge that underpinned Orientalism. Anand provocatively challenges Eliot and Dobrée in a reverse Orientalist assertion of reimagining Kipling. ‘I am going to rewrite Kipling’s *Kim* ... from the opposite point of view.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 52) This assertion demonstrates Anand’s willingness to reorder the Orientalist literary legacy on India. Kipling in Britain had been viewed as the pre-eminent writer on and of India. He made it visible to the West. However, Anand redirects this dynamic by stating that whatever lessons were learned from Kipling’s work on India, were infused from India and were not imposed by Kipling upon it. ‘I wanted to say that if Kipling had some sense of the life process it was from India, but refrained for fear of seeming to be a boaster.’ (Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, 95) Orientalism is reversed here in Anand’s deliberate refusal to enunciate an imposition of knowledge.

The following argument looks at Islam and its figuration through Orientalist lenses in the contemporary age; pre and post September 11th. Whilst the preceding chapter has focused on Hindu Indian writers; the following chapter will analyse the impact of Islam and its interaction with the West as figured through writers who themselves are either born in the West or resident within it by choice. My decision to focus centrally on Islamic writers is made because the dichotomy between Orient and Occident has increasingly been clarified as a conflict between the West and the Islamic world. This ‘clash of civilisations’ has ushered in a new dawn of Orientalism that according to my thesis has also been met by reverse Orientalist responses that have sought to mediate between the intransigence of two grand meta-narratives. The chapter also represents a neat arc in the thesis by the manner in which it corresponds to the very earliest Islamic presences (Sake Dean Mahomed, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Mirza Sheikh I’tesamuddin) within Britain that are now being replayed, refigured and contested.

Chapter Four – Modern Islam and the New Age of Orientalism

In the course of the preceding chapters, I have not deliberately singled out a particular strand of the Orientalist logic; instead, I have framed it in accordance with its broad sweep of the Oriental world that encompasses great civilisations such as India and the Islamic world. During the following argument, I will be investigating the various forms in which Islam and the Islamic world have now assumed the primary mantle of the uncivilised anti-West that pose a threat to the civilised world (as defined by the West) and act as a recurring ‘Orient’ that needs to be Occidentalised. The Islamic writers whose works are analysed in this chapter are all either British-born or long-time residents within Britain; a factor that renders the Orient/Occident dialectic as problematic. This is in part due to the fact that formulations of new British identities have long been taking shape and a British Islamic identity is just one of many new reformulations. Thus, the primary focus is on writers who have been framed as the internal ‘Other,’ the Oriental who resides within the Occident that is now subject to a reformulated Orientalist logic; where to integrate is to Westernise. Global politics are now inextricably linked to local realities because cataclysmic events such as 9/11 and the bombings in London on July 7th 2005 have created a cultural, racial and social environment where new demands are placed on people of multiple heritages to make clear choices about what it takes to be British, Western and ultimately modern. Orientalism is reconstructing itself around both a specific cultural and religious threat; an internal Other that needs to be changed.

At first my focus is centred on essentially secular Muslim writers, luminaries in the Western literary establishment whose presence has been accorded as evidence of the ability to reclaim an internal Other. Also, it has been employed conversely as proof of a newly formulated Orientalism that uses Muslim writers in order to extricate British Muslims from their cultural values that are deemed as irrevocably Islamic and by inference anti-Western. Salman Rushdie, although born in India, has been viewed as one of the major literary figures in the English language over the last forty years. Hanif Kureishi has also assumed a position as one of the foremost British Asian writers who have helped to explain the post-colonial and post migration condition within Britain today. Both authors have been lauded for their engagements with issues such as diaspora, identity, immigration, sense of home and Britishness. Their relations to the Islamic world and their dealings with Islam have also been broadly studied: most notably *The Satanic Verses* (1988), the fatwa that resulted because of its publication, Rushdie himself and Kureishi's subsequent writings in response. All of these events have contributed to a climate that has pitched Islam and Britain (the West) against each other within an Orientalist rubric of East/West. Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album* (1995) explicitly deals with issues that arose during this period of dispute, as he was a supporter of his friend Rushdie's right to offend within a secular British landscape where such dissenting voices were allowed. My focus on these two writers is centred on their non-fiction writings that have sought to engage with, at times provoke and defuse the posturing of intransigence between Islam and the West.

The latter part of the chapter will examine the ways in which British Muslim writers have settled into Britain, negotiated the apparent conflicting loyalties between their faiths and the country in which they live. I will also investigate the

legacies of these attempts to create spaces for subsequent Muslims to be both British and faithful adherents to Islam. Ed Husain's *The Islamist* (2007) deals with the East/West conundrum in its most overtly religious and intransigent forms; namely the spectre of religious (Islamic) fundamentalism and the forms in which global politics have affected local realities for Muslims on an everyday level in Britain. Sarfraz Manzoor in *Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock 'n' Roll* (2007) explores the difficulties experienced by second generation immigrants whose loyalties to their family and cultural values are complicated by their desire to integrate within British society. Finally, I will analyse Imran Ahmad's *Unimagined* (2007) whose memoir posits the pitfalls of mutually exclusive cultural and religious identities and strives to find forms in which to navigate between the polarities of Islam and the West.

The Rushdie Affair and the Kureishi Response

Much has been written about Salman Rushdie and his role at the forefront of post-colonial literature. However, this status has been dominated by his writing of *The Satanic Verses* (1988) which pitched him into a maelstrom of claim and counter claim about the role of Islam within and against the Western World. Ideas of free speech, individualism, multiculturalism and secularism became embroiled in a process that dichotomised Islam and the West, both as a faith and a civilisation. Rushdie has generally positioned himself in between these two polarities, stating that for a writer in the postmodern world such a position is both fertile and instructive when trying to render comprehensible the postmodern condition:

Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy. (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 15)

In the aftermath of the publication of *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie's position was far from conflicted; he was placed at the centre of a cultural and religious furore that he was accused of manufacturing in accordance to the dictates of liberalism and free speech laid down by the West. His right to offend was coordinated along Western conventions and the unprecedented reaction was both justified and unjustified in its manifestations. Rushdie in this sense can be viewed as a reverse Orientalist in a classical sense, as his world view was perceived to be explicitly Western masquerading as universal, and used against the Orient (Islam) in order to shake it from its religious, archaic and medieval stupor.

Salman Rushdie has proclaimed that literature should be political and inquisitive: that it thrives when questioning official truths, offering alternatives and different versions of reality. 'Writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both groups try to make the world in their own images; they fight for the same territory. And the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' versions of truth.' (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 14) In his desire to unmask official truths, Rushdie had previously attacked nationalisms both in his native India and Pakistan through the novels *Midnight's Children* (1981)²⁰⁵ and *Shame* (1983).²⁰⁶ Ian Almond has argued that Rushdie's treatment of nationalisms as a narrative of unity is closely allied to his depiction of religion, and Islam in particular. 'A metaphysical complicity would explain why, for Rushdie, Islam and nationalism seem to collude so easily with one another, why "faith-in-leaders and trust-in-God" seem to go hand-in-hand as mutually reinforcing illusions.'²⁰⁷ However, the concepts and issues dealt with in *The Satanic Verses* were cross-border issues that stoked feelings of dissidence and offence both in the Islamic world and from Muslims within the West. This was a response that could not have been unforeseen and as a consequence leave Rushdie open to criticisms that he was adopting an Orientalist position in a deliberate attempt to change the Orient from its religious and nativist predilections to something more reminiscent of Western secular traditions. To what extent were Rushdie's actions deliberate? Was he deliberately inserting Islam into the Western narratives of dissent and secularism as an act of free speech or as a deliberate Orientalist act in order to affect the way Islam was practised in the West and to absorb it within Western conventions of religious worship that demanded it remained exclusively in the private realm?

When Rushdie and the 'Rushdie affair' is analysed in detail one can view the merits of Rushdie's right to free speech and dissent. However, one can also see the need for him to be aware of the unequal power relations such an act could expose and how the text could be perceived as provocation, received negatively and emotionally reacted to. I would stress that he needed to be aware of the pressures and sensitivities involved in the Islamic community's minority position within Britain and the West generally; especially because of the Orientalist tradition that had left a legacy of intrusion and distrust in regards to Islam, and its perceived antiquity, all of which positioned it as the antithesis of the progressive West. I do though concede, as Almond has noted, that Rushdie has a multifaceted approach to Islam in his art. He renders 'various Islams [that] surface according to the mood and feeling of the moment; different versions serve different purposes at different times.' (Almond, 'Mullahs, Mystics, Moderates, and Moghuls,' 1138) In this respect, he can be viewed as anti-Orientalist in the manner in which he resists the reduction of Islam into a monolithic whole that is devoid of internal variances. However, he can also be viewed as an Orientalist in classical terms because his book precipitated an 'Oriental' reaction that was drawn from the Orientalist textbook: one of heightened irrationality, sensation and unreason.

The 'Rushdie affair' and the subsequent debate regarding free speech, both in Britain and the Islamic world, resulted in a double bind in regards to its action, reaction and manifestations. You can view him as a spokesman for outsiders, critics and questioners of faith but then also as a figure who conversely imprisons them within the resulting and unprecedented reaction against his text. Bhikhu Parekh has elaborated that the Rushdie protests were instantly framed within Orientalist's lexicons of Islamic absolutism and reactionary haste:

Rather than stimulate a reasoned discussion of their grievance as they had naively hoped, the book-burning incident led to a torrent of denunciation. Muslims were called ‘barbarians,’ ‘uncivilised,’ ‘fanatics,’ and compared to the Nazis. Many a writer, some of impeccable liberal credentials, openly wondered how Britain could ‘civilise’ them and protect their innocent progeny against their parent’s ‘medieval fundamentalism.’ Hardly anyone appreciated that the burning of *The Satanic Verses* was more an act of impatience than of intolerance, and that it bore no resemblance to the Nazi burning of libraries and persecution of intellectuals. (Parekh, ‘The Rushdie Affair and the British Press,’ 3)

Parekh goes on to argue that the national media and press fuelled and framed the ‘Oriental’ reaction that was to be condemned and civilised by the West:

The national press exacerbated the situation. It sent out correspondents to Muslim areas, especially to Bradford, where they interviewed leaders and even young and confused Muslim boys and girls with leading questions, and created the overwhelming impression that the *entire* Muslim community was seething with a bloodthirsty spirit of vengeance. Unintentionally, the press united the Muslim community, created a new orthodoxy, and made every Muslim who wished no harm to Rushdie feel ‘inauthentic’ and not a ‘true Muslim.’ Even some of my sensible Muslim students fell into this tragic trap. (Parekh, ‘The Rushdie Affair and the British Press,’ 4)

Rushdie, viewed through Parekh’s perspective, can be scrutinised as an unwitting accomplice in a maelstrom of Orientalism that was dictated by the media and state power. Muslim objections to the text were only allowed to be expressed in a singular and preconditioned form; alternative expressions were left silent.

Parekh argues that the liberal press became illiberal in its perceived defence of its ‘agreed’ values; an Orientalist assumption that conflated Western values with universal ones. A call to liberalism in Parekh’s view was used to blackmail the Muslim community into rejecting their traditional values:

Hardly any liberal realised that in countering Muslim ‘fundamentalism’, they were setting up a rival fundamentalism of their own and corrupting the great liberal tradition. Historically speaking, whenever liberalism has felt frightened and nervous, it has tended to become aggressive and intolerant. (Parekh, ‘The Rushdie Affair and the British Press,’ 10)

The intolerance of the response to *The Satanic Verses* is then mirrored in the criticism Western liberalism reflects back upon the act. I would agree with Parekh in stating that liberalism is too closely aligned with Western secular traditions; a historical discourse that cannot be applied universally to people from other contrasting parts of the World:

[Liberalism] cannot be advocated and defended in abstract and non-contextual terms. It might be granted in some areas, but not in others, or granted to a much greater degree in one area than in another without incurring the charge of inconsistency. It is not indivisible and requires a more complex and differentiated justification than is offered so far. (Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press,' 12)

Salman Rushdie's role in making a Muslim presence within Western literary tradition is laudable and well deserved. However, in attempting to insert Islam within a tradition of scepticism in a rapidly secularised Western world he was culpable of an Orientalist imposition of Western values upon a body of belief that had not historically been predisposed to such conditions.

I would argue that the secular premise of Western scholarship and citizenship positions Islam and the Islamic world under a microscope that will inevitably provoke and perpetuate an Orientalist system of thought. Anouar Majid has stated that Salman Rushdie's attempts may well have been conceived outside of Orientalist dogma but their implementations were always going to lead it down a path that regurgitated Orientalist logic, because a space for the third world critic had only allowed it a presence within the Western critical tradition and not productively outside of it:

The Orientalist discourse continues unabated; for as long as the secular premises of Western scholarship are not interrogated, it is at best doubtful whether the discursive interventions of some Third World critics can effectively contribute to the liberation of Third World peoples. In other words, the intractable secret to unrelenting cultural imperialism, together

with the Orientalist discourse it engenders, is the framework within which political contestations take place. No matter how insightful and liberating Western self-critique can be, it still partakes of the secular assumptions of the Enlightenment, and cannot persuasively intervene in any discourse without accepting the limitations of this condition.²⁰⁸

Majid views the continuing legacy of Orientalism as a system of thought that is essentially anti-postmodern:

Just when postmodern theories were thought to have taken us to a new dimension of thinking about ourselves in the world, essentialist views of civilization are being resurrected to account for continuing tensions, without subjecting the culture of capitalism and the lasting effects of colonialism on the shape of the world today to rigorous criticism. (A. Majid, 'Can the Postcolonial Critic Speak,' 6)

In summary, I would state that the 'Rushdie affair' was a seminal event in the increasing polarisation between the Muslim community within Britain (and worldwide) and the wider British public. It 'has been a crucial step in the revival of Islamophobia in the West. The attention the liberal media had previously given to antiracism in debates surrounding Muslim immigration into Europe now shifted to debates about the threat Islam posed to liberal democracy.'²⁰⁹ The furore's manifestations and effects reignited an Orientalist textual attitude that was still operating beneath the surface. It was now directed towards an internal Other that needed to be civilised and changed from its roots to something that made it ameliorative to Western culture and society.

Like Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi was born in India and also became a displaced Pakistani after his family migrated to the newly partitioned Muslim homeland in the subcontinent. His response to the 'Rushdie affair' in *The Black Album* (1995) saw him put Islamic fundamentalism and the right to offend in a secular democracy under the microscope. His dealings with these issues were irrevocably influenced by the

‘Rushdie affair’ even though his literary corpus was underpinned by a desire to break social, political and cultural conventions within Britain. Class politics within Thatcherite Britain and his renderings of sexuality were just two issues that were placed consistently under his critical lens. Islam within Britain, however, became an unavoidable issue that increasingly overlapped with a variety of his artistic concerns. Thus, the Orientalist gaze was assumed by him in the sense that he sought to render intelligible for a British readership the hazards in and potential for making Islam commensurable with British life. His writing is also imbued with a sense of being in between two cultures and ways of life. What Rushdie termed, falling between two stools, is evoked by Kureishi on a trip back to Pakistan in his seminal essay *The Rainbow Sign* (1986):

Someone said to me at a party, provoked by the fact I was wearing jeans: we are Pakistanis, but you, you will always be a Paki – emphasizing the slang derogatory name the English used against Pakistanis, and therefore the fact that I couldn’t rightfully claim to either place.²¹⁰

This sense of loss is felt on both sides of the Orientalist divide.

Kureishi also bemoans the rise of Islamisation across the global divide, and again this is firstly centred on Pakistan, a newly formed nation state that had begun to turn its back on the secular ideals of its founder Mohammed Jinnah. Kureishi retells a story where an elite Pakistani rails against the Islamification of all aspects of Pakistani society:

He said to me: “I tell you, this country is being sodomized by religion. It is beginning to interfere with the making of money. And now we are embarked on this dynamic regression ... Pakistan has become a leading country to go away from. Our patriots are abroad. We despise and envy them.” (Kureishi, *The Rainbow Sign*, 24)

This rebuttal of secularism and the embracing of a religious alternative is emphatically criticised by Kureishi:

Islamization built no hospitals, no schools, no houses; it cleaned no water and installed no electricity. But it was direction, identity. The country was to be in the hands of the divine, or rather, in the hands of those who elected themselves to interpret the single divine purpose. Under the tyranny of the priesthood with the cooperation of the army, Pakistan would embody Islam in itself. (Kureishi, *The Rainbow Sign*, 26)

When the spectre of Islamism is raised within a global and British setting, Kureishi is not afraid to criticise what he deems as a religious process that is inextricably linked to political objectives orchestrated by a will for and of power.

Kureishi rejects Islamism as an effective transnational movement within diasporic spaces in dealing with modern issues of cultural syncretism, hybridity, consumerism and globalisation:

[He views] the taking up of Islam as an aberration, a desperate fantasy of world-wide brotherhood; it was a symptom of extreme alienation. It was also an inability to seek wider political views or cooperation with other oppressed groups – or with the working class as a whole – since alliance with white groups was necessarily out of the question. (Kureishi, *The Rainbow Sign*, 21)

Other aspects of life within Britain, in particular, presented difficulties to the immigrant's ability to settle effectively into a rapidly changing world and especially into post-colonial states such as Britain. The class system, education, poverty, racism and other aspects of social welfare all presented problems to the Islamic migrant that Kureishi believed could not be navigated and resolved through entrenchment in one's own religion and culture. A cross-cultural consensus needed to be mediated and grasped. His analysis of Islam within Britain can be viewed as reverse Orientalism by the forms in which an internal Other is identified, aggregated and classified; a strategy that was used in the Orientalist appraisal of foreign landscapes for the benefit of the imperial metropole.

Around the time of the 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, *The Word and the Bomb* (2005) was published: it comprises a series of essays and articles on Islam, its

relation to and its place within Britain, fundamentalism, interaction with Western values of secularism and liberalism and also the increased presence of overt sexuality and consumerism. Hanif Kureishi believes that neglect in mainstream and implicitly white literary circles of issues affecting ethnic minorities within Britain is a factor that has contributed to the entrenchment of many Muslim immigrants into the safety net of their religious and cultural affiliations:

Oddly most modern British writers have been reluctant to similarly engage with such subjects at home. Questions of race, immigration, identity, Islam – the whole range of issues which so preoccupy us these days – have been absent from the work of my white contemporaries, even as a new generation of British writers has developed, following the lead of V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 3)

Kureishi also stresses the importance of art and fiction, in the absence of political inclusivity, to be able to speak to the multiplicity that everyone feels in the post-colonial world:

We think too, through the often mystifying topic of multiculturalism, about how mixed and mixed up we are, so much so that we find it disconcerting for others to be multiple, and even worse, for us to be so, too. And because our politicians are so limited in what they can say and think, we need artists, intellectuals and academics to keep our cultural conversation going, to help us orient ourselves. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 4)

This final affirmation can be viewed in metaphorical terms; to orient oneself within multicultural Britain was in essence to become Orientalised, to identify with the Other within oneself as well as within society.

Kureishi allies this lack of awareness of the Other with the relative lack of dissent in Western art and culture as a cocktail that intensifies the estrangement of communities between themselves: ‘it is when the talking and writing stops, when the attempt is to suppress human inconsistency by virtue, that evil takes place in the silence.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 10) Moreover, he argues that cultural

clashes in regards to arranged marriages, faith schools and religious clothing need to be debated and contested in an environment where disagreement is acknowledged but resolved through dialogue and recognition of difference. Kureishi warns against the stigmatisation of Muslims as the enemy within and the subsequent re-installation of colonialist sensibilities like pure Englishness:

I have heard calls among the British for the re-installation of Englishness, as though there has been too much multiculturalism, rather than not enough. This wish for rigid, exclusive identities mirrors extreme Islam itself; it is an attempt to counter fundamentalism with more fundamentalism. This is a form of shame when it is our excesses we should celebrate. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 9)

To retreat into the parochialism of nationalisms is seen as a retreat into a form of cultural fundamentalism that stifles not only cross-cultural cohesion but also intellectual freedom. ‘To retreat into a citadel of ‘Englishness,’ to refuse to link up or identify with them, is to deliver them over to superstition and poverty of the imagination.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 11) On the opposite side of the cultural spectrum minorities are also implored to forsake excessive integration and assimilationism. “‘Over-integration,’ the erasing of racial and religious differences, can become coercive or even fascistic. It can give rise to more racism, anger and resentment.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 9) Orientalism is subverted in Kureishi’s desire to encourage difference at the expense of uniformity and universal values that were the *raison d’être* of the Orientalist’s mission.

Race and religion are now viewed by Kureishi as the key divisive issues within British society. The legacy of Orientalist divisions between civilisations (Islam/West) are now realised on an everyday level within Britain, where the local and the global are intimately intertwined. ‘The real differences in Britain today are not political, or even based on class, but are arranged around race and religion, with

their history of exploitation, humiliation and political helplessness.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 6) Kureishi states that diversity needs to be championed and cherished to counteract the fetishisation of polarities (East/West) by both racisms and fundamentalisms. ‘If both racism and fundamentalism are diminishers of life – reducing others to abstractions – the effort of culture must be to keep others alive by describing and celebrating their intricacy, by seeing that this is not only of value but necessity.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 87) On the opposite side of the global divide, Kureishi also views the failings of art, culture and political institutions as the reasons behind the rise of Islamism and religiously fundamentalist agendas in Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. ‘One of the most significant reasons for the rise of Islamic extremism in the Third World is the presence of financial and political corruption, along with the lack of free speech, and the failure to make space for ... political dissent.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 6) In *The Word and the Bomb*, Kureishi frames intolerance as being resident both in the growth of a stringent and austere form of Islam in sections of the British Muslim community and the reactions in which the media and wider society have framed Islam in response.

Kureishi theorises that, as opposed to a retrogressive shift, the adopting or re-adopting of more trenchant religious positions has been perceived as enabling for young Muslims in Britain, because it provides a means for a more solid and defined identity that had been denied their parents’ generation. In refusing to blindly assimilate to Western values, Kureishi explains that:

For young religious radicals, extreme Islam worked in many ways. It kept them out of trouble, for a start, and provided some pride. They weren’t drinking, taking drugs, or getting into trouble like some of their white

contemporaries. At the same time they wanted to be rebels. Being more fervent Muslims than their parents... (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 8)

This increase in strict religious observance is again underpinned by a double logic; in the sense that it allows young Muslims to be ‘simultaneously disobedient and conformist. ... [By] joining a cult or political organisation [that] can fit both needs, the puritanical young can defy their fathers, but keep to the law of the ultimate Father. They are good, virtuous children, while rebelling.’ (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 8) This double logic in Kureishi’s opinion directly enables the development of a reverse Orientalist dynamic to ferment because it fixes the West into a unified framework:

Among Muslims, there has been a reverse Orientalism, or ‘Occidentalism,’ at work. Many of the fundamentalists I met, indeed many Muslims, were keen to see the West as corrupt and over-sexualised; there was ‘too much freedom.’ The West could seem chaotic, over-individualistic; the family was less important, or constantly mutating. These Muslims refused to look at Western culture and science, or the institutions which can only flourish in a relatively free atmosphere, preferring to see the inevitable underside: addiction, divorce, social breakdown. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 10)

To Kureishi, the formation of a distinctly anti-Western identity that nourishes fundamentalism is a direct result of the inability to view the intricacies and internal fissures of Western society; a clear parallel to the Orientalist framing of the East into essences frozen in time.

Through Kureishi’s formulation, one can see the way in which the West becomes Orientalised within a fundamentalist logic. The West comes to represent sexual licentiousness, social idleness and retrogressive social/cultural values. This then becomes a grand arching narrative that mirrors the taxonomies that underpinned Orientalism. In relating a conversation with a fundamentalist called Ali, Kureishi states that the ‘West’ signified an image, like liberalism, for anything bad. ‘The West’s freedom made him feel unsafe. If there was too much freedom you had to

make less of it ... renunciation [of the West] made him feel strong ... while giving in made him feel weak.' (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 55) Conversely, fundamentalism is viewed as offering identity and security that is the polar opposite to liberal uncertainty and open mindedness:

Fundamentalism provides security. For the fundamentalist, as for all reactionaries, everything has been decided. Truth has been agreed and nothing must change. For serene liberals, on the other hand, the consolations of knowing seem less satisfying than the pleasures of puzzlement, and of wanting to discover for oneself. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 58)

Kureishi counterpoints liberalism with fundamentalism in a manner in which the former ironically allows the latter to flourish. The right to dissent and be different allows the space for fundamentalist groups to form and formulate alternatives to a society whose values inadvertently engender polarities. 'Enlightenment values – rationalism, tolerance, scepticism ... don't provide spiritual comfort or community or solidarity. Fundamentalist Islam could do this in a country that was supposed to be home but which could, from day to day, seem alien.' (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 58)

Kureishi goes on to elaborate that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism has been fuelled in many ways by the rise of modernity in the West and around the World:

Fundamentalist Islam is an ideology that begun to flourish in a conspicuous age of plenty in the West, and in a time of media expansion. Everyone could see via a satellite and video not only how wealthy the West was, but how sexualised it had become ... The new Islam is as recent as postmodernism. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 84)

This reverse Orientalism is imbued with a form of sexual fetishism as well. The West is sexually licentious and unrestrained and thus needs to be civilised:

This fantasy of the Other is always sexual, too. The West is re-created as a godless orgiastic stew of immoral copulation. If the black person has been

demonised by the white, in turn the white is now being demonised by the militant Muslim. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 87)

Kureishi likens fundamentalism to both racism and Orientalist dogma:

The fundamentalist works only with fantasy. For instance, there are those who like to consider the West to be only materialistic and the East only religious. The fundamentalist's idea of the West, like the racist's idea of his victim, is immune to argument or contact with reality. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 87)

Thus, Kureishi's formulation of reverse Orientalism (as Islamic fundamentalism) is still predicated on the inextricable link between the Orient and the Occident (Islam/West) as polar opposites; that each fulfils the narrative for the Other to be constructed as inferior.

In many ways, Hanif Kureishi is the embodiment of Western values: he is mixed race, a writer of social comment, secular, sexualised and liberal. He denounces fundamentalism but states there are discernible reasons for its rise both in the West and the Islamic world: 'Muslim fundamentalism has always seemed to me to be profoundly wrong, unnecessarily restrictive and frequently cruel. But there are reasons for its revival that are comprehensible.' (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 59) In order for the intractable binaries of Islam and the West to begin to be dismantled, a willingness from both sides to rigorously interrogate themselves needs to be made. Kureishi calls for mutual understanding and constant engagement, where we 'need to ensure that what we call 'civilisation' retains its own critical position towards violence, [and] religious groups have to purge themselves of their own intolerant and deeply authoritarian aspects.' (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 93) Multiculturalism needs to be a carnival of ideas: a design that interacts, asks questions of each other, resolves conflicts and is vigilant about others that may arise for it to prosper:

Religions may be illusions, and they may betray infantile wishes in their desire for certainty, but these are important and profound illusions. But they will modify as they come into contact with other ideas. This is what an effective multi-culturalism is: not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas – a conflict which is worth enduring, rather than a war. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 100)

Kureishi summarises by stating that for such a climate of multicultural acceptance to take root then art and culture need to lead where politics and religion are unwilling:

If communities are not to be corrupted by the government, the only patriotism possible is one that refuses the banality of taking either side, and continues the arduous conversation. That is why we have literature, the theatre, newspapers – a culture, in other words. (Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 93)

For Kureishi, the way to reverse Orientalism and collapse fundamentalism is to dismantle them through dialogue and recognise difference as opposed to the intractable impositions of superior values by one polarity to the other. The following section will introduce the idea of Islamophobia and then analyse specifically the memoir of Ed Husain and his life, both as an Islamist and his subsequent reformation as a British Muslim who renounces Islamic fundamentalism.

The New Orientalism – Islamophobia

In attempting to specify the new forms of Orientalism prevalent in the world today one cannot disguise the fact that it is Islam, the Islamic world and its relations with the West that is most forcefully placed under the Orientalist microscope. This general framing of Islam as antiquated, anti-modern, backward, uncivilised and ultimately a threat has assumed a new dimension in the respect that it is also now centred within the old imperial powers. The Orientalist design to take control and change is charged against itself; where Muslim communities are asked to integrate within British ideals of living. Distrust towards Muslim people's ability to integrate within British society has been termed by the Runnymede Trust as Islamophobia.²¹¹ Gabrielle Marranci interprets this definition as an 'unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. (Runnymede Trust 1997)'²¹² He also directly links this form of cultural suspicion to the legacy of Orientalist discourse that has prevailed for centuries around the world:

As we have seen, it is not through the stereotyping of physical characteristics that *Islamophobia* spreads, but through the misrepresentation of the Muslim world, and the representation of their life-style as alien from Western society. The misuse of Islamic texts, the reproduction of Orientalist, and colonialist images of Muslim men as violent and patriarchal and of Muslim women as submissive and oppressed, of which also academia is not immune, facilitate the representation of Islam as barbaric culture, and hence founded on anti-Western values. (Marranci, 'Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: rethinking Islamophobia,' 107)

In analysing Islam within the West and against it as a grand civilisation, one has to concede that it continues to be framed within Orientalist lexicons of comprehension

in a more overt manner than that which has been meted out to India and China for example.

This concentration of Islam as a grand civilisation that continues to exist outside of modern and Western systems of thought and values is confirmed in the affirmation of Samuel Huntington that the relationship between the West and Islam represents a 'clash of civilisations.' Huntington explicates that the Islamic world and Western culture are distinctly incompatible:

The general failure of liberal democracy to take hold in Muslim societies is a continuing and repeated phenomenon for an entire century beginning in the late 1800s. This failure has its source in the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts. (Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations*, 114)

Huntington further elaborates by stating that the clash between the Western world and Islam is not centred on fundamentalism but fundamental differences between two contrasting ways of looking at and making the world:

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defence. It is the West, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining power imposes on them the obligation to extend their culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West. (Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations*, 218)

In this suggestion he also posits the idea that the Islamic world is underpinned by a grand arching narrative that positions itself as superior; a superiority that is not realised economically or politically.

This theory assumes a reverse Orientalist angle because Huntington believes that Islam as a civilisation, and not as an extremist branch, is intent on realising a global and universal position of power; again a textbook Orientalist design:

The Islamic resurgence is the effort by Muslims to achieve this goal. It is a broad intellectual, cultural, social, and political movement prevalent throughout the Islamic world. Islamic “fundamentalism,” commonly conceived as political Islam, is only one component in the much more extensive revival of Islamic ideas, practices, and rhetoric and the rededication to Islam by Muslim populations. The resurgence is mainstream and not extremist, pervasive not isolated. (Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations*, 110)

Huntington believes that the Islamic resurgence of the last forty years since the 1970s is a result of the Islamic world rejecting Western modes of living and modernity, instead favouring an Islamic order of society. They paradoxically reject Western power and universalism but desire its position of economic and political superiority. Samuel Huntington’s formulation, however, is also in essence an Orientalist assertion itself. It conflates the designs of extremist Islam with that of the whole Islamic world by deliberately ignoring internal fissures; it reduces the Islamic world to a monolithic whole.

Gabriele Marranci has aligned the universalising tendencies of Orientalist logic with that of Islamophobia. Marranci argues that it is the culture and religion of Islam that are seen as most dangerous; the individual is merely its tool of menace:

Events with international resonance, such as September 11th, or the earlier Rushdie affair, have only made acute a chronic condition affecting the European Muslim communities. Muslims are perceived not only as ‘aliens,’ but also as dangerous, even if they were locally born in the West, or have been in the country for several decades. However, it is not the person per se that it is perceived as dangerous, but his/her Islamic culture and identity. (Marranci, ‘Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: rethinking Islamophobia,’ 111)

This representation of Islam as a universal threat to Western powers such as Britain and America is made relevant because it conversely takes as absolute, the idea that the West also figures as a monolithic entity. Islamophobia is underpinned by this dual sense of universalism. ‘The idea of Islam that challenges and threatens the Western values and life-styles facilitates the misrepresentation of Europe as a

Christian monolithic entity.’ (Marranci, ‘Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: rethinking Islamophobia,’ 110) Thus, I would contest that both Islamism and Islamophobia are ironically linked by these universalising assumptions; they mutually reinforce the others grand arching narratives. The West and Christianity as a faith are denied their internal variances and specific locations.

Gholam Khiabany has called for these universalisms to be dismantled in favour of more detail and clarification when approaching Islam and its relationship with other cultures and religions:

When comparing Islam with other religions and ‘cultures’, we must make it precisely clear what we speak of, and what comparisons we make. The meaning of ‘Islam’, even when used to denote the religion of Islam, is too general and imprecise to be useful in an analytical argument.²¹³

I would argue that such concessions need to be made when addressing the West and its specific interactions with Islam; both in the Islamic world and within its own borders. The following section will investigate in more detail this internal element, where Ed Husain’s *The Islamist* (2007) explores the dimensions of Islamic fundamentalism within Britain and its roots in the Islamic world. His memoir acts as both an Orientalist and a reverse Orientalist text in its fluctuating account of Muslim life in Britain.

Ed Husain – The Islamic Orientalist

Orientalism as a discursive reality has been nourished and underpinned by its adaptability. Its totality has been inextricably linked to its multiplicity, in the respect that it can reform and reshape to different conditions in order to fulfil its own logic as a grand arching narrative. Ziauddin Sardar in his analysis of Orientalism has stated that the multiplicity and variability of Orientalism as a discourse needs to be recognised and understood; that its multiplicity represented its unity. ‘It would be more fruitful to see Orientalism as a whole series of discourses, changing, adapting to historic, scholarly and literary trends, but interconnected by a coherent set of common features.’ (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 55) A large part of this multiplicity has remained unchanged, and that is the way in which Islam has remained as the recurring Orient for the West. Sardar places Islam at the genesis of Orientalism and its construction:

Whatever threads of Greece and Rome endure, and they do endure even today, the history of Orientalism begins with the history of Islam, with the crisis of the new, the unprecedented and inherently subversive to which an urgent answer has to be found. (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 17)

In Sardar’s summation, Orientalism in its earliest forms was preoccupied with its definition and relations with Islam; a dynamic that predated its interaction with other parts of the Orient. ‘The West lived with the Orient of Islam, and its own Orientalist ideas, for 800 years before it had significant encounters with any other Orients.’ (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 54)

Islam played a significant role both in the framing of Orientalism and its subsequent incorporation of other civilisations:

It was largely focused on Islam; and Islamic studies became a major branch of Orientalism. Orientalism thus studied Islam and other civilisations with European ideas of God, man, nature, society, science and history and consistently found non-Western cultures and civilisations to be inferior and backward.²¹⁴ (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 4-5)

Ed Husain's *The Islamist* can be viewed as a significant example of the durability of Islam and Orientalism to interact, conflict and ultimately take new forms of discourse. The legacy of Orientalism has in Edward Said's view underpinned this reformulated dialogism between the West and Islam:

The result is that we redivided the world into Orient and Occident – the old Orientalist thesis pretty much unchanged – the better to blind ourselves not only to the world but to ourselves and to what our relationship to the so-called Third World has really been. (Said, *Covering Islam*, 40)

Husain's memoir charts his journey from childhood into maturity along the coordinates of a descent into Islamic fundamentalism from a comfortably secularised Muslim family back to a more integrated British/Western identity. His reverse Orientalism exhibits all of the above criteria; he assumes a reverse Orientalist position in the manner in which he homogenises the West through the fervour of Islamist rhetoric. However, as the memoir comes to a conclusion his Islamist position alters dramatically and he lurches into a dangerous position where he can also be viewed to assume a classic Orientalist position in the manner in which all forms of Islam need to submit to an exclusively secular version of Britain to integrate successfully.

Before analysing Ed Husain's description of British Islam and its extremist manifestations, one has to explore the manner in which Islam has been portrayed in the media; both on a global level and within a British context. Edward Said, in his text *Covering Islam* (1997), has argued that traditionally the very usage of the term

Islam has been loaded and delivered in a manner that is instructed by and caters for Western material interests:

Silence in the press, which is busy covering the hostage crisis; silence in the academy, which is busy advising the oil industry and the government on how to forecast trends in the Gulf; silence in the government ... "Islam" is only what holds the West's oil's reserves; little else counts, little else deserves attention. (Said, *Covering Islam*, xv)

Said's hypothesis regarding Islam and the West is that it is now the height of Orientalist thinking in regards to the Eastern world, where to cover Islam is at once to highlight and neglect certain aspects of Islam in accordance with engendering a specific world view of what Islam and the Islamic world are; a legacy of Orientalism that continues to resonate:

Between them, the activities of *covering* and *covering up* Islam have almost eliminated consideration of the predicament of which they are symptoms: the general problem of knowing and living in a world that has become far too complex and various for easy and instant generalizations. Islam is both a typical case and, because its history in the West is so old and well defined, a special one. (Said, *Covering Islam*, xii)

For Said, silence as much as what is printed or spoken, frames Islam in a particular way that relegates Islam and Muslim peoples into a position of inferiority: 'if you speak of Islam you more or less automatically eliminate space and time, you eliminate political complications like democracy, socialism, and secularism, and you eliminate moral restraint.' (Said, *Covering Islam*, 38) These voids have directly manifested into fear and suspicion of an Other that appears to all intents and purposes as incommensurable with the West.

In Said's formulation the Western academy and episteme has aided the formation of this dialogism (Islam/West) to appear mutually exclusive:

The academic experts whose specialty is Islam have generally treated the religion and its various cultures within an invented or culturally determined

ideological framework filled with passion, defensive prejudice, sometimes even revulsion; because of this framework, *understanding* of Islam has been a very difficult thing to achieve. (Said, *Covering Islam*, 6-7)

In the dialogism of Islam and the West, Islam is always a reductive term and not enabling like the West which encompasses more than just Christianity:

[The West is] full of enriching contradictions and yet always “Western” in its cultural identity; the world of Islam, on the other hand, is no more than “Islam,” reducible to a small number of unchanging characteristics despite the appearance of contradictions and experiences of variety that seems on the surface to be as plentiful as those of the West. (Said, *Covering Islam*, 10)

Said has directly attributed this selective reduction and discursive intransigence to the legacy of Orientalism; a discourse that is further problematised and polluted by the shifting dynamics of a rapidly modernising and globalising world. ‘Respect for the concrete detail of human experience, understanding that arises from viewing the Other compassionately, knowledge gained and diffused through moral and intellectual honesty: surely these are better, if not easier, goals at present than confrontation and reductive hostility.’ (Said, *Covering Islam*, xxxi) For Said, the structures of Orientalist thinking cannot allow true cross-cultural understanding to take root because they rely on homogeneity of thought that eschew real intricacies in favour of grand certainties.

Ed Husain’s memoir is a new way into understanding Islam and its extremist manifestations. It is also a new form in which to understand the legacy of Orientalism and its interaction with Islam, both in its relationship with the Islamic world and within Britain itself. His text is centred on Islamism within Britain but also acknowledges its roots within a global context. Husain’s adoption of an extremist form of Islam can be viewed as reverse Orientalism in both an extreme and mimetic sense. His descent into an ideology of absolutism mirrors the certainties that underpin Orientalist logic. Conversely, the extreme anti-Western position of Islamic

fundamentalism can be viewed as a type of reverse Orientalism in a subversive sense; in the respect that the West becomes an abstraction for all that is deemed immoral, undesirable and anti-Islamic. It is defined just as much by what it is not (the West) as much as it what it symbolises.

Ed Husain was born in Mile End in the East End of London on Christmas day 1975. In his primary years, Husain was brought up in Limehouse where he attended the Sir William Borough School and subsequently a predominantly Bangladeshi (Muslim) secondary school called Stepney Green. After studying at Tower Hamlets College, Husain graduated with an MA in Middle Eastern studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Husain's memoir begins in earnest fashion as it details the extent of his integration within Britain: his family's interpretation of mild (Sufi) Islam, his school years, family life and maturation through school and into university. Primarily the tolerance and acceptance of his school days are emphasised; he is made to feel welcome and his difference is relegated to the background. 'The colour-blind humanity of most of my teachers, strength in the face of tyranny, taught us lessons for the rest of our lives. Britain was our home, we were children of this soil ... we belonged here.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 2) He further states that such memories initially helped him 'form a belief in Britain, an unspoken appreciation of its values of fairness and equality.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 5)

This climate of tolerance was reinforced by the way in which his family practised a moderate form of Islam in contrast to the Islamism he is subsequently attracted to. Inclusivity was encouraged: 'there was never any question of religious tension, no animosity between people of differing faiths. My mother still speaks fondly of her own childhood friends, many of whom were Hindu.' (Husain, *The*

Islamist, 3) Husain states that these mutual climates of acceptance taught him ‘about a mainstream, moderate Muslim ethos rooted not in Britain but in the Eastern Muslim tradition of seeking guidance and religious advice from an elderly sage.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 15) This dynamic of calm however, is not able to sustain itself in Husain’s life and an increased detachment from mainstream British society is elucidated by his adoption of a contrasting form of Islam to that of his parents. This is noted almost from the first page of the memoir when he writes: ‘Britain was our home ... and no amount of intimidation would change that – we belonged here. And yet lurking in the background were forces that were preparing to seize the hearts and minds of Britain’s Muslim children.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 2)

This process is initiated by his interest in and subsequent membership of the YMO (Young Muslim Organisation UK), which was a youth body designed to re-engage young Muslims around a more stringent and active branch of Islam within Britain. On joining the YMO Husain first encounters the Islamist ideal. I would argue that this ideal can be viewed as an explicit reverse Orientalist design in that it sought to engender a unified Islam into a modern Islamic state; it viewed such an aspiration as both possible and necessary. Husain’s primary accomplice in the YMO, Siraj, states:

Our aim is to change the Muslims, to make them live Islam as a complete code of life, not as a mere religion. Islam is more than a religion. We want to see Islamic government, Islam taken out of mosques and homes, and into all areas of life. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 32)

This could not be engendered passively but through overt activism and an amalgamation of religious doctrine with modern discourses that directly appealed to young Muslims. This division of generations along the lines of religious approach is

described in the differences he views between the Brick Lane Mosque of his parent's faith and that of the East London Mosque favoured by the YMO:

Inside the mosque the atmosphere was incomparably different from Brick Lane ... here the place was buzzing with young, trim-bearded, English-speaking activists. There were no sombre and elderly worshipful Muslims in these offices – pious Muslims belonged only in the prayer hall – rather [this mosque provided] a sense of organization and discipline; everybody seemed to know their place. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 27)

Husain demonstrates in this dynamic the internal fissure between the practices of faith between generations within the Muslim community where the 'moderate' dialectic was reversed; the parents were moderate and secularised whilst the children were religious and traditional.²¹⁵

Under the guidance of this form of religious belief, Husain becomes alienated and ostracised from wider British society. The Islamist doctrine fulfils his need for inclusivity at the expense of integration within Britain. He notes: 'I was sixteen years old and I had *no* white friends. My world was entirely Asian, fully Muslim. This was my Britain. Against this backdrop, the writing's of Sarwar's guru, Mawdudi, took me to a radically new level.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 35)²¹⁶ This new level encompassed a need for Husain to take the forms of his religious worship outside of the family home and into a wider, more public forum:

Surely, God was at home too. My God, however, was no longer at home; he had to be sought out in activism, drive, energy, mobilizing and expanding the Islamic movement. I had to be a 'true Muslim,' completely enmeshed in Islam, not a 'partial Muslim' like my parents. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 39)

Tahir Abbas argues that radicalism can be an easy option to the complex and conflicting forces that exist in tension between Muslim and Western ideals; identity can be its first casualty. 'Radicalism renders invisible the task of having to negotiate a British identity with a Muslim identity, as the core principle of radicalism rests on

the belief that such a merger is not only impossible but potentially a betrayal to Islam.²¹⁷ Husain is at first guided away from his parents and radicalised by his activist peers in the YMO. One explains to him that ‘partial Muslims like our parents will never understand what we are trying to do. Be patient, brother. You are from among the true Muslims.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 41) This separation from his parents becomes increasingly pronounced as Husain becomes more and more aware of the gap between his version of Islam and that of his parents.

Husain expounds on the manner in which his Islamism is formed in resistance to his parents; their version is private and internal, at odds with his public and political stance. Thus, the generation gap within his family comes to represent the wider gap between private religious faith and the public discourse of Islamism:

They were both vehemently opposed to my version of Islam and made their dissatisfaction clear in no uncertain terms. My father spent hours trying to explain that Islam was spiritual, internal, and about drawing closer to God and not about radical politics, assassinating politicians and trying to set up an imaginary Islamic state. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 42)

His parents assume the position of Orientalists in the sense that they come to distrust his version of religious doctrine, its practice and implementation. He fulfils the fears of the classic Orientalist in his conception of Islam. Husain’s Islamisation leads to eventual estrangement from his family, mirroring his marginalisation from mainstream British society:

My disagreements with my parents were now so deep, their revulsion for my Islamism so powerful, and my commitment to ideological Islam so uncompromising, that my father had little choice but to give me an ultimatum: leave Mawdudi’s Islamism or leave my house. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 44)

Ironically, the first generation immigrants of his parents' generation are more receptive to secular British ideals, and thus the polarity of Orient/Occident can be metaphorically glimpsed through the internal dynamics of the Husain family.

As I have outlined before, the malleability of Orientalism can lead to other forms of Orientalist discourse to become manifest. Islamism mirrors Orientalism in its division between two exclusive entities. Where Husain's parents can be portrayed as mock Orientalists in their disapproval of him and his Islam, he can be viewed as a reverse Orientalist in the manner he appropriates the grand arching narrative of Orientalism and then redirects it upon the West. This is primarily focused through his increased activity within Islamist movements: he graduates from the local activism of the YMO to that of the Global Jamat-e-Islami group which he joins through his membership of the MET (Muslim Educational Trust). 'Their key was that Islam was not merely a religion but also an ideology that sought political power and was beginning to make headway. The spiritual Islam of my parents' generation was slowly giving way to something new.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 22) Husain's ideology assumes universalist pretensions in that it is also mapped outside of local British borders: 'we acted locally, but were connected globally.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 61) Again, this mirrors classic Orientalist designs; the will to power is delineated along a global spectrum.

Islamism as Reverse Orientalism

Islamism and classic Orientalism have a variety of overlapping narrative strands: they both formulate and operate through political means, they think globally and act locally, they reduce the Other to an abstraction and demonstrate an insatiable will to power that is deemed necessary for the Other to prosper. Ed Husain's radicalism is formed along these lines; his wish to be a better Muslim morphs into a desire to create a better world along the same Islamised principles that were deemed requisite for his own transformation. Bobby S. Sayyid in his work on Islamism and Eurocentrism, *A Fundamental Fear* (1997), draws clear parallels between Orientalism and Islamist discourse. 'The Islamist project revolves around gathering the ways Islam operates in different discourses, and unifying them by using Islam as a master signifier.' (Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, 47) This directly mirrors the way in which the Orient was homogenised and utilised as a master signifier for imperialism to ferment and sustain itself. Sayyid states that at the level of enunciation Islamism is very similar to Orientalist discourse: 'Islamism is presented with all the certainty of a meta-narrative. The content of Islamist discourses is replete with grand claims and essentialist categories marshalled in an uncompromising absolutist language.' (Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, 118) It is also similar in the way the local is inextricably bound up in the global. 'Islamism, then, is a project which attempts to transform Islam from a nodal point in discourses of Muslim communities into a master signifier.' (Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, 48) In Sayyid's formulation, where the local and global are bound, so too is the link between Islamism and globalisation (Westernisation). Sayyid argues that 'the integration of Muslim societies into the world capitalist system, dominated by the West, led to the

weakening of 'Muslim' identities; in other words, Islamism is a nativist response to inclusion in a western-led global system.' (Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, 22) Theoretically, the analogy between Islamism and Orientalism opens up many similarities; however I do concede that at the level of power, they are not yet symmetrical in their effect or historical resonance.

In his memoir, Husain details that this global imbalance is what drives the Islamist agenda; the will to power is present but also fuelled by its perceived abundance in other parts of society. Global politics and their inequalities are used as an example of the universalist scope of Islamist thinking in *The Islamist*. Husain reasons that conflicts such as 'the Balkan crisis truly radicalized many Muslims in Britain, I desperately wanted to help, to *do* something to stop the killing and we were young; we believed we could change the world.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 75) This failure to protect Muslim interests is attributed to both a local and global political malaise. Local level activism of 'the YMO appeared more and more parochial. They concentrated only on maintaining complete control over the East London mosque as an organizational base, and engaging in social work, educational events, youth activities, and fundraising with a view to recruitment.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 77) Husain's Islamism is then escalated, redeployed and pitched into a global dimension. 'The Muslim nation was a global nation, and we all had a religious obligation to establish a global state that would rival the United States and Europe. This was not a fantasy.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 88) He thus espouses the ultimate Orientalist pretension; a call for Islamic hegemony. Paul Gilroy has stated that 'identity becomes a question of power and authority when a group seeks to realise itself in political forms.'²¹⁸ I would argue that Husain sustains this idea and engages in a double logic in his call to Islamic arms; the West is universalised in its position of

power and the Islamic world is unified in its subsequent exploitation. The parameters of the Orientalist polarity of Islam and the West is sought not to be dismantled but explicitly reversed.

A racialised and hierarchical profile of other aspects of the global social body underpins Islamism: it drives its cultural, economic, political and religious thinking. Husain proclaims that ‘without question we despised Jews and perceived a Jewish conspiracy against our nascent Islamic society.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 54) As Western colonial powers aggregated the Eastern world into the Orient from its constituent parts, the Islamist ideology does also. Ed Husain explains that ‘the concept of the “Muslim Nation,” as opposed to a number of disparate ethnic communities, was key. To the Hizb, Indians, Malaysians, Turks, Indonesians, Arabs, Africans were all part of a single, global Muslim nation, an *ummah*.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 90) This formation of a unified collective identity is also reinforced by an idea of superiority: another Orientalist dialogism that Husain comments was formed along racial and religious lines within Britain. ‘Muslims increasingly defined themselves against Hindus, Sikhs, Jewish management, Christian Africans. We saw ourselves as Muslim more than anything else. Muslim confidence was not only reinstated within months, but a feeling of Muslim superiority was palpable.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 142) The Islamist ideology is thus strengthened by what it is not and what it is formed against.

Islamism appears as a form of reverse Orientalism in the manner in which it ironically spreads and feeds out of the values and social principles of a secular British body politic; social organisms it promises to root out and extinguish. Husain concedes that:

[We] failed to understand that the secular liberal ideals that allowed Muslims to congregate at college in Britain were the very same ideals that tolerated homosexuality. It was secularism that allowed Muslims to build mosques, worship freely, and live in harmony – not Christianity. But my appreciation of secularism came only later in life. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 55)

In his view, British liberalism allowed for the opposite to take root within sections of the Islamic community:

In the multi-cultural Britain of the 1980s and 1990s we were free to practice our religion and develop our culture as we wanted. Our teachers left us alone, so long as we didn't engage in public expressions of homophobia or intimidation of non-Muslims. But Britishness and the British values of democracy, tolerance, respect, compromise, and pluralism had no meaning for us. Like me, most of the students at college had no real bond with mainstream Britain. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 73)

Husain describes how these opportunities for dissent were actioned on campuses and other public forums around Britain. Aliases were used to establish an Islamist agenda and disseminate it through a variety of social bodies. 'We made full use of British pluralism and the encouragement to dissent by setting up alternatives to an Islamic society. When we failed to win control of an Islamic society we simply ... started a host of other student societies instead...' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 108)

The dexterity of the Islamist political programme again mimes the manner in which Orientalism was able to function as a mobile discourse, in both a literal and figurative mode. 'We dominated Muslim groupings on campuses up and down the country; nobody threw us out. We always found an alternative way to enter, to regroup, rename ourselves, and find a different pretext.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 15)

Husain defines Islamists as a diverse group that is malleable and able to manoeuvre along and amongst a variety of contexts. 'Islamists in Britain are a diverse and complicated phenomenon. They are divided by age, ethnicity, class, geography, and their allegiances to Islamists in Southeast Asia or the Arab world.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 166) In the same way that Orientalists were able to manoeuvre within a

variety of Oriental contexts, Islamists are able to Orient themselves through a variety of British and global locations. The irony of Ed Husain's memoir is that he is ultimately unable to do so himself; his global pretensions as an Islamist are extinguished when he leaves British shores and ventures to the Middle East. In leaving Britain, Husain's sense of Britishness is located and strengthened: 'The longer I was away from Britain, the more British I became. Syria forced me to ask myself who I was.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 227)

Reverse Orientalism as Islamism within the text is ultimately discarded in favour of a more secular and moderate form of Islam. His membership of the Hizb ut-Tahir allows him a grander stage on university campuses but the estrangement from his family, and by implication, a moderate form of Islam leaves him feeling alienated from a more streamlined understanding of Islam and its role in his life. The political ideology leads to a lack of theological nourishment. Husain states: 'I began to realize how little these people knew about the Koran. I was getting older, and the Hizb seemed suddenly like pretentious, counterfeit intellectualism.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 146) Moreover, he begins to understand the narrative constructions of his extremist ideology which allow him to distinguish between Islam and Islamism: 'now I began to wonder whether Islam had anything at all to offer. I had completely confused Islamism with Islam, to me [at the time] they were the same.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 154) Husain comes to realise the political dimension of his religious belief and declares a wish to break free from the discourse of Islamism. 'Without Arabic I felt I would be dependent on handed-down Islam from Islamists, Wahhabis, or others.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 188) Islamism begins to divide as opposed to unify, a factor that undermines in Husain's view, the universalist intentions of Islamism as an ideology. 'I had committed myself to Islamism because I wanted to be a better

Muslim, a complete Muslim, not in order to divide Muslims.’ (Husain, *The Islamist*, 109) The ideology of Islamism is ultimately rejected by Husain in its fundamentalist and extreme forms; a realisation that is laudable. However, is he able to escape the homogenising and totalising inclinations of Orientalist discourse in his reformation as a ‘moderate British Muslim?’

On his return to Britain, Husain engages with a new sense of being a Muslim within Britain; a realisation brought to bear through a humanist and universalist context:

Just as my Britishness had come to the fore while living in the Muslim world, my Muslimness now seeks expression. I feel as though I belong to both the East and the West, and sometimes find it difficult to reconcile the two sides of my personality. Then I remind myself that, before I am anything, I am human, and in this I am one with the world. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 269)

However, I would contest that his humanist pretensions are replete with Westernised and secular ideas of citizenship. Bhikhu Parekh has theorised that such a uniform conception of social relations can never be equal within a multicultural Britain:

Since human beings are at once both similar and different, they should be treated equally because of both. Such a view, which grounds equality not in human uniformity but in the interplay of uniformity and difference, builds difference into the very concept of equality, breaks the traditional equation of equality with similarity, and is immune to monist distortion. (Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 240)

Humanism, in Husain’s formula for social cohesion, cannot escape its Western traditions. It acts as a totalising social structure and another form of monism that he is unable to think beyond at any point in his transformation from Islamist (reverse Orientalist) to secular and liberal British Muslim (Orientalist).

Ed Husain blames multiculturalism as a cross-cultural policy and framework for creating a ghettoised society of minority cultures that have withdrawn from

cross-cultural engagements with wider British society. Husain argues that the intentions of multiculturalism have had the opposite effect within British society in regards to community cohesion. 'The multiculturalism fostered by the labour government had created mono-cultural outposts in which the politics of race and religion were being played out before my eyes.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 282) Tariq Modood would question both this conclusion and perceive Husain's wholesale relegation of religious faith to the private sphere as being Orientalist in its overarching demands and unequal implementation. His definition of a progressive multiculturalism 'means a multiculturalism that is happy with varied hybridities but has space for religious identities. Both hybrid individuals and ethno religious communities have legitimate claims to be accommodated in political multiculturalism.' (Modood, *Multicultural Politics*, 208) A moderate form of political Islam is never given a voice in Husain's text, nor is it viewed as viable in the future.²¹⁹

In his defence, Husain seems to be aware of the monolithic and Orientalist terms in which all Muslims were encased within and framed through the media:

Since my return I have observed British Muslims being browbeaten by certain sections of the media and government, demanding 'integration' and an end to 'parallel lives.' The implied accusation, of course, is that Muslims are guilty of terrorism and that an undefined 'integration' will put a stop to it. (Husain, *The Islamist*, 283-84)

However, he seems helpless in his inability to think outside of such binary structures. This can be recognised when he states that 'the 7/7 suicide bombers were symptomatic of a deeper problem: unbridled Islamist ideology gaining a stronger hold in Britain's Muslim communities. That ideology and its prescriptions are becoming the acceptable norm for expressing political disenchantment against 'the

West' - a mythical conception just as much as 'the *ummah*.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 278) Islamist ideology is conflated with wider Muslim public opinion. Sardar has argued that Husain's text and his position as an Islamic spokesman can itself be viewed as an exclusion and negation of the moderate Muslim majority and their voice in society. He views the lionising of Husain's 'moderate' views as an 'another attempt at the marginalisation of the overwhelming majority who never had a moment's doubt that Islam gives no sanction for such murderous and misguided perversion of belief.'²²⁰ For Sardar, the only choice that Husain presents for Muslims is extremist Islamism or liberal secularism; an Orientalist dialogism.

Ed Husain ends with a call for moderate Islam to take root in Britain: 'without doubt, a British Islam is emerging. It remains to be seen whether it will be in harmony with the world in which it finds itself, or if it rejects and repels it.' (Husain, *The Islamist*, 286) I would concede that he ends with a positive desire for integration, but not with an approach that can deal with the intricacies of cultural communication between Muslim communities in Britain and the wider British society. Husain asks for the Islamic community to become moderate and privatised in their religious belief within a secular Britain without describing a process for which such a social matrix could take root. Thus, he is ultimately locked into a classic Orientalist template; that of changing the Oriental from what it is to what it should be, to suit a Western framework. Ziauddin Sardar warns that the aspiration of all cultures to secularise is to modernise along Western lines, reasoning that Husain along with 'all societies are marching towards a single utopia, the ultimate Western organizing principle for society: secularism.' (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 91-92) Sardar believes 'to arrive at a sustainable plural future [in Britain and globally] there must be a process beyond Orientalism.' (Sardar, *Orientalism*, 118) I would ultimately

argue that Ed Husain as a reverse Orientalist or a secular Briton in *The Islamist* is unable to conceive of such an approach.

Sarfraz Manzoor – Greetings from a Moderate and British Muslim

In the preceding investigation of Islam within Britain, I have studied the development of extreme forms of Islam within Britain today. The following analysis will penetrate beneath the veneer of Islamised Britons and explore the different reactions of Muslims within Britain to a modern, secular and Westernised society. Sarfraz Manzoor is a journalist employed by *The Guardian* who has also written for a variety of publications including *Esquire*, *Prospect*, *The New Statesman*, *The Observer* and *The Independent*. Appearances as a cultural commentator and critic on radio and television have followed his stint as a commissioning editor at Channel Four. He was born in Pakistan but was two years old when he arrived in Britain in 1974 with his mother, brother and sister; his father had immigrated to Britain in January 1963. Manzoor's memoir *Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock 'n' Roll* (2007) is a very contemporary look at the intricacies, conflicts and connections of being a Muslim brought up in a rapidly changing Britain. His story emphasises the enabling possibilities of being a British Muslim; a social identity that could withstand the polarising intentions of both Islamism and Islamophobia. Race, religion and culture are not allowed to dominate his status as a newly formed Briton. Modernity in the forms of music, travel and socialisation are embraced to a point where mutually exclusive identities (Muslim/British) are comingled and blurred; a departure from the totalising and monolithic Orientalist structures that previous Orientalisms dealt with before, have indulged in.

Sarfraz Manzoor, in his portrayal of British Muslim life offers a different view on the generational split within the Muslim community in multicultural Britain

to that explored by Ed Husain in *The Islamist*.²²¹ The modern/traditional dialectic is delineated along traditional (father) and modern (son) lines:

I defined myself in opposition to my father. All that he believed, the values he upheld, the ambitions he cherished I rejected as embarrassing and outdated. When he said he was Pakistani, I declared I was British; he was Muslim, I was confused; he believed in family, I championed the individual; he worshipped money, I claimed it meant nothing. I convinced myself that he was so different, the notion that I might have inherited anything from him appalled me. The sooner I could shed my past the better. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 6)

The conflict between the West and Islam is thus delineated along a generational framework that encompassed the private family unit. Within that unit the father Mohammed Manzoor assumes a variety of mantles that signify what it means to be Islamic or indeed, Oriental. Moreover, he also comes to represent an Islamic/Oriental distrust of Westernisation. America becomes this symbol of emphatic Westernisation that is deemed socially and morally corrosive. Manzoor states that for his father ‘the United States was everything he hated about Britain multiplied a hundredfold. “Why do you want to go to America anyway? Americans are unclean, immoral, look at how little their girls wear.”’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 135) These associations are transposed onto Britain and their effects on the younger generation within Britain are both critiqued and feared.

The cultural dilemma that accompanied immigration to Britain from the subcontinent was the fear of losing one’s roots and identity in the pursuit of economic betterment. This fear is residual within Manzoor’s upbringing and that of his peers within the minority Muslim community in Luton. Mohammed Manzoor is warned by his friend Sadiq to:

Keep an eye on the little ones. There won’t be any Pakistanis in their schools in Marsh Farm. Too many white people around and they will start thinking they are white too. Do what I do: take the children to Pakistan in the summer,

let them see their relatives, their country. Otherwise they will become strangers to you. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 25)

Manzoor explains how this fear of cultural contamination was transposed into a sense of expectation which could be a burden on his and other young Muslim people's shoulders. He is reminded by his father to not forget 'the sacrifices I made to come to this country, to bring you here. Do not forget where you come from and who you are. Do not forget us. It was a huge burden to place on a young boy's shoulders.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 35) The emphasis on one's roots and traditions can also be viewed dialogically as a fear of modernity. I would argue that in the text Manzoor's father is a reverse Orientalist who rails against the homogenising effects of Westernisation. He resists the attempt of Western society to amalgamate his family in accordance with Orientalist conceptions of modernity and progress. Sarfraz Manzoor reasons that 'they must have felt they were trying to turn back the tide of progress before it rose to destroy and tear apart their families.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 25) For Manzoor in his memoir, the choice is thus presented as one between being Muslim/Pakistani or irrevocably British; mutual or multiple identities are deemed impossible or inauthentic. 'I was brought up to believe that Pakistan was our true home and Britain merely where we happened to live.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 240)

Identity is directly linked to representation. The manner in which you conducted yourself in society dictated the forms in which you were defined. This can be viewed as another submission to Orientalist logic: 'my father was all about becoming. And he was always smart and cared obsessively about the image that was projected of himself and his family to the outside world.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 47) Manzoor describes how sartorial disposition could indicate a loss of identity and roots to his father's discerning eye. He states: 'for my father my hairstyle was

emblematic of something far deeper; in rejecting my coarse curls I was rejecting him and everything that he stood for.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 45) Islamic and Western culture is diametrically opposed for Manzoor's parents and thus the Orientalist dialectic of civility and the uncivilised is regurgitated but then subverted:

There was an uncomfortable disparity between the world view of my parents and the universe of my friends. The films I watched and the music I listened to were filled with the magic and wonder of romantic love and yet at home it was continually being made clear to me that I would never know what love was. Love was futile and foolish, marriage was sensible, solid and stable. Native individuals fell in love, good sons got married. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 187)

The cultural schemata that Manzoor is judged against leave him exposed to the accusation of failure; that he is too Western. 'To the outside world I might have been a success but as a son and a brother I was an abject failure: selfish, uncommunicative and a disappointment.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 83)

In setting up the Orientalist dialectic as a measure by which to judge the relationship between Sarfraz Manzoor (modern) and his parents (traditional), I would argue that the dichotomy is complicated by the manner in which integration into British society occurred with different effects and processes, both within and outside of the Manzoor family in multicultural Britain. Sohail, Sarfraz's brother, is emblematic of a nativist (Pakistani) response to multiculturalism:

What I had always found so infuriating about Sohail was, despite having spent thirty years in Britain, how Pakistani he was; his friends were all Pakistani and he remained resolutely unintegrated. Despite having been educated here his values were thoroughly traditional. My brother did not have any crisis of identity, he was not torn between two cultures. He was a Pakistani... (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 86)

This is further complicated by the gender inequality within Asian communities that privileged the potential and experiences of boys above girls. With regards to his sister Navela's experiences, Manzoor notes that 'even today, it is still more difficult

to be a strong-willed independent Asian girl than boy; harder still for Navela in 1980.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 60) Avtar Brah’s conception of diaspora problematises this idea of a fixed ethnic potential that applies to all members of a specific ethnic minority:

A multi-axial performative conception of power highlights the ways in which a group constituted as a ‘minority’ along one dimension of differentiation maybe constructed as a ‘majority’ along another. And since all these markers of ‘difference’ represent articulating and performative facets of power, the ‘fixing’ of collectivities along any singular axis is called seriously into question. (Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 189)

In my formulation, I would argue against the uniform classifications of Muslim peoples with(in) Britain. The adoption of Western modernities and cultural artefacts can be determined both by choice (Sohail) and existing power relations (Navela).

Orientalist distinctions between European/Pakistani, modern/anti-modern and Islam/West can no longer be conceived in dialogical or absolutist terms; there is a middle ground. Sarfraz Manzoor’s memoir describes in detail his lifelong struggle to make a home in between these polarities; not in denying that such a place exists. Initially, a fear that such a hyphenated terrain does not exist is expressed:

I was not into mainstream pop culture and ... [Hanif Kureishi and Salman Rushdie] were literary writers, both Asian but from a very different background to mine and so for someone like myself who was not born into wealth and did not have mixed-race heritage there were no role models. I didn’t know if the things I wanted for my life were possible for someone like me. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 171)

These expectations are presented and received both from his parents and wider British society. Manzoor recalls that ‘the two things everyone knew about Muslims was that we did not drink and we had arranged marriages. Throughout my teenage years I was relentlessly quizzed on both topics...’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 193) In *Greetings*, Manzoor describes how these Orientalist impositions create a social

climate where he becomes estranged from his family and its incumbent Muslim identity.

Initially, Manzoor self-consciously accepts his alienation from tradition. His embrace of modernity and Westernisation is indicative of this dynamic in his conception of identity. Manzoor also struggles to reconcile his Muslim identity with wider British society. He recalls:

With each year at high school being Muslim became increasingly frustrating; when I was younger it had meant reading the Koran, going occasionally to the mosque and tolerating the boys who would knock on our door to sing Christmas carols on Eid ‘because you told us it was your Christmas.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 223)

As Manzoor grows into adulthood, Islam becomes increasingly obsolete in regards to his life, his choices and his ambitions:

By college I was no longer fasting during Ramadan, and had to be practically dragged to the mosque at Eid. The older I became the less sense religion seemed to make; Islam, as my parents taught it, seemed to be about rules and obedience. Not thinking for yourself but trusting the words written down hundreds of years ago; I found that an unsatisfying way to live. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 226)

The rules and strictures of his faith are unable to be equated with the Westernised freedoms he desires and indulges in.

However, Manzoor is slowly able to draw a distinction between his religion and cultural expectations. He states:

To be a good Muslim seemed to demand that you blindly follow the rules, repeat the rituals time and time again and never think for yourself. It was only many years later that I realised it was not Islam I was reacting against, it was the cultural values of my parents’ generation. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 227)

Thus, the cultural expectations of his parents are understood as a discourse that was designed to shield him from the perceived vices of Western society and its

antithetical culture. At first Islam is framed in accordance with what one could not do and not what it enabled. 'To be a Muslim as a teenager seemed to involve not being able to do things: not being able to have Christmas presents, not eating during Ramadan and not being able to drink.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 228) Ironically, in going to America, the bastion of explicit Westernisation, Manzoor realises that the traditional elements of his upbringing unconsciously underpinned and sustained him; only through distance is he able to realise and reconnect with these cultural bonds:

As I was eating it struck me that for all my frustration about being Asian there were some unquestionably good things about it: perhaps my father had been right when he had talked about a shared sense of community, it was just that I needed to travel to the United States to witness it first-hand. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 147)

The realisation that Manzoor begins to grasp is the idea that he could be a modern Western citizen as well as a Muslim that his parents desired him to be. 'Not only does this entail a recognition of a diversity of minority identities, "a plural blackness," but also an understanding that ethnic identities are not pure or static.' (Modood, *Multicultural Politics*, 193)

Manzoor increasingly comes to recognise his own split identity; an identity that was incomplete on both sides. 'My father had taught me there were two choices: I could be British or Pakistani. I did not feel British, I did not even know what it meant. But the trouble was that I did not feel wholly Pakistani either.' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 245) This conception of ethnicity is in flux; what Stuart Hall has conceived as a 'new ethnicity:' one that recognises the 'extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences, and cultural identities which compose the category "black."' (Hall, 'New ethnicities,' 166) I would stress that such a conception needs to be more specific in regards to the plural Muslim ethnicity that

Sarfraz Manzoor exhibits. Thus, this form of ethnicity distinguishes him from his parents and the aforementioned writer Ed Husain. These permeated fears of dilution and fracture do not define his engagement with modern Britain as loss, either as a Muslim or a Briton. Manzoor defines his fractured identity as a modern phenomenon. This is a result of social processes such as globalisation, multiculturalism and modernity: 'at the age of thirty I was comfortably British, occasionally Pakistani, and only technically Muslim. This was the twenty-first century after all. What did religion matter?' (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 233) Manzoor concedes that his religious identity was never totally severed; his abstention from alcohol was one facet of his identity that maintained a road back to faith. He reasons that:

So long as I did not touch alcohol then I could say I was a Muslim. It was not much of an identity but it was the only one that could not be denied to me. I was a Muslim. I just did not know what that meant. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 231)

In the memoir, the spectre of Islam becomes more and more central to his vision of himself as a citizen within multicultural Britain; he chooses to accept all aspects of his identity and not relegate selections to the periphery.

A primary factor behind his ability to do so is the manner in which he realises identities are by their very nature multiple: they are constructed as wholesale, monolithic and absolute through discourses (Orientalism/racism/nationalism) whose motivations are explicitly political and designed for power. Avtar Brah has stated that partial differences exist within minority cultures as much as between them: 'Asian cultures are differentiated according to class, caste, region, religion and gender ... there would seem to be as many possibilities of intra-ethnic as of inter-ethnic 'clashes of culture.' To think in terms of bi-polar cleavage ... is quite

untenable.’²²² Through his life in Britain, Manzoor comes to reject both Orientalism and assimilationism as umbilical cords to exclusive identities. Instead, Manzoor embraces his multiple self: the idea that there were many ways to be Muslim, British and British Asian:

The biggest lie that I was told when I was growing up was that there was only one way to be a Muslim. That way was to be obedient, deferential and unquestioning; it was to reject pleasure and embrace duty, to renounce sensuality and to never ask why. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 238)

This acknowledgment of multiplicity allows Manzoor to reconcile both his ethnic roots and his cultural ties to Britain. He emphasises that: ‘I was born in Pakistan but made in England; it is Britain which is my land of hope and dreams.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 269) I would argue that Manzoor demonstrates the ability to be both a faithful Muslim and an active member of multicultural Britain. He personifies the capacity to be an integrated British Muslim; an identity that hegemonic discourses such as Orientalism and nationalism attack and discredit. Paul Gilroy in *Between Camps* (2000) has noted that ‘calculating the relationship between identity and difference, sameness and otherness is an intrinsically political operation. It happens when political collectivities reflect on what makes their binding connections possible.’ (Gilroy, *Between Camps*, 99) Manzoor’s reverse Orientalism questions the very basis of Orientalist and nationalist logic; his memoir showcases that it is not inevitable to be one or the other.

As the memoir reaches its hopeful conclusion, Manzoor is aware of the challenges that lie ahead. He acknowledges the reappearance of mutually exclusive ideologies (nationalism/racism/Islamism) that have stopped and will continue to threaten a genuinely integrated and multicultural Britain. These threats are glimpsed on both a global and local level. Manzoor describes how the tragedy of 9/11

concentrated his mind on what it meant to be a Muslim within Britain. ‘Osama Bin Laden changed my life. For the first thirty years of my life I had been running away from my religion but on 9/11 my religion caught up with me. There was nowhere left to hide.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 235) The 7/7 bombings in London are also denounced as an overt act of violence without justification on a social, political or religious level. Manzoor feels disillusioned at the acts carried out in Islam’s name: ‘when I heard those young British Muslims speak so contemptuously about living in this country, my reaction was one of anger, confusion and betrayal. What they felt and what they preached was not in my name.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 264) Global politics and local events can affect the way in which he and others like him are perceived throughout British society. As a consequence of this he ultimately rejects the totalising and divisive ideologies of both neo-Orientalism and Islamism as a form of reverse Orientalism.

Sarfraz Manzoor refutes the claims of terrorists and extremists to act in the name of him and his ethnic community. He also contests the idea that there is a genuine clash of civilisations between Islam and the West:

What most maddened me about the attention given to these Muslim extremists was the feeling that my claim on this country, my right to call myself British was being wrenched from me. And yet I was never convinced that there really was a clash of civilisations between Muslims and the rest of the world; the clash was between people of all religions – those who were moderate and reasonable – and extremists. (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 266)

Manzoor warns against the re-introduction of exclusively separate identities within Britain and across the world. Such a process would only lead to more conflict in what is a rapidly globalising world that makes the presence of totalising social discourses increasingly problematic and dangerous. Though Manzoor demonstrates in his memoir the ability to be both British and Muslim without the total

denunciation of one or the other; he warns against the presence of a social and political climate that now demands such decisions be made. As evidence he states that ‘after 9/11 it was no longer about Pakistanis, Indians and Bengalis but Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. And there was no doubting who was public enemy number one.’ (Manzoor, *Greetings*, 236) The reintroduction of neo-Orientalisms (nationalism/Islamism) that demand the separation or negation of religious identities is alive. However, Sarfraz Manzoor in *Greetings from Bury Park* illustrates that such discourses can ultimately be evaded and rejected.

Imran Ahmad – The Unimagined Return of Missionary Orientalism

The potential commensurability of Islam and the West has been opened up by Sarfraz Manzoor's book, dealt with in the preceding analysis. The following argument also centres on a 'moderate' Muslim writer whose memoir deals with the pitfalls of growing up in the space between his ethnic/religious background and the country of his residence. Imran Ahmad was born in Pakistan on the 13th of September 1962. He and his family moved to England a year later, first moving to Manchester but then subsequently settling in London. Ahmad attended infant school in Fulham, whilst living in Putney where he was eventually admitted into Hampton Grammar School. His initial desire to attend medical school was prevented by his grades and thus he consequently enrolled to study Chemistry at Stirling University in Scotland. In writing his memoir *Unimagined* (2007), Ahmad has labelled it as an attempt to render intelligible the conflicts and intricacies of 'a Muslim boy who meets the West' at a time when the two entities are engaged in a process that demands that attempts be made for cross-cultural understanding and acceptance to be achieved. Imran Ahmad's narrative speaks of the trials and tribulations of having to reconcile his religious identity, which is exclusive, with the plurality of his cultural environment. It also delineates a journey through an Orientalist process that has been generally ignored in contemporary depictions of Islamic peoples' interaction with the West; namely the cultural hegemony of Christianity within modern British society. In the following analysis I will investigate the Orientalist spectre of religious ideals that compromise the ability of Muslims to follow their faith in a genuinely multicultural and multi-religious society.

Imran Ahmad's memoir begins in Pakistan, where he is born into an educated and middle class family from Karachi. Upon moving to Britain, this position of class and education is complicated to the point where the Ahmads' social position is essentially reversed. Ahmad highlights the fissure between expectations and reality in post-war immigration; the journey to the Occident does not explicitly correspond with the social posturings gleaned from the Orientalist social and textual attitude:

There was a nasty shock on arrival in England. The kinds of jobs that my parents had access to were not what they had expected. In England, they were not considered to be educated professionals. They were expected to be lower-class manual workers. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 3)

He goes on to state that 'in this society, my parents, who were from the educated middle classes in Karachi, found themselves in a very hostile environment, at the mercy of uneducated, uncouth people in terms of jobs and accommodation.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 5) However, the uncomfortable position of Oriental inferiority that was the very essence of colonial rule is not reversed. Instead, it is reformulated along racial lines that relegate immigrants to the bottom of the social ladder in Britain. 'Although many people in London were renting out rooms, some had signs which read "*No Irish or Coloureds.*" The more liberal-minded ones had signs which read "*No Coloureds.*"' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 5) Social stratification is not immediately overcome through immigration to the post imperial metropole. Religious identity played a key part in this social layering. The ability of Muslims to practice Islam freely was allowed through a combination of tolerance and legislation, but it was also relegated to the peripheries of social life and implicitly distrusted.

Ahmad's life at school is permeated with his desire to integrate and eschew any signs of difference. This desire is expressed in his assertion that Jesus was a positive influence on all people, including him and his family. 'Everyday we have

assembly. Every day I hear a story about Jesus, who lived a very long time ago. Jesus was a very good man and told everyone to be nice to people. That seems fair to me.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 11) This assertion is indicative of the manner in which religion in the early part of the memoir is emphasised as a significant presence in his life, both at school and in the home. However, it is Christianity that is at first central to the viewing lens which Ahmad uses to comprehend his social environment. On using the Biblical fable of the Prodigal Son Ahmad can be viewed as metaphorically speaking of his own family’s migrant hopes and sensibility:

One day we hear the story of the Prodigal son. I am sitting on the floor with the other children, listening to this. We are told that the Prodigal Son left his father’s house to go to a faraway land, because he thought that he could find a better life. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 11)

These Biblical messages are valorised by an impressionable Ahmad; however, it also triggers a sense of difference in his increasing realisation that his religious identity was not consistent with that of the majority of his peers at school. ‘I do have a growing awareness of being different: both foreign and not Christian. I learn a lot about Jesus in school. But I think that I’m not supposed to believe in him.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 12) This disparity in religious identity increasingly informs the way in which Ahmad mediates his place within British society: in the school place, the family home and the wider social spectrum.

As a youngster Ahmad constantly struggles to reconcile the ethnic differences between his Muslim identity and that of British social culture. Englishness is associated with normality and Islam with his exclusion from it. ‘Being different is troublesome sometimes. Why couldn’t I just have been normal (i.e., white, English, Christian)? Then I would have just fitted in with everyone, and I

wouldn't have to be afraid of Jesus.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 20) Ahmad emphasises the ethnic specificity of being a Muslim in Britain:

We exist in a community that maintains its own, separate existence within the greater white English community. I lead a dual existence, belonging to English society (for the most part) at school, and being Pakistani outside school. My parents are friendly with the white neighbours, but it is no more than that. They have no white friends who come to visit our home. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 18)

In his childhood years of the 1960s and 70s his family were not overtly ostracised from British society; instead, they were denied or wilfully ignored total integration. The Orientalist attitude of missionary Christianity in colonies such as India is thus reframed as a primary obstacle to Islamic amelioration within Britain; a reverse Orientalist dynamic in the respect that it is now British society that figures as the terrain for ideological exchange.

Initially, life for the Ahmads as a Muslim family in Britain is difficult to surmount and the thought of return is entertained:

My father continues to work in London; he has no choice. My mother is highly stressed by the misery, humiliation and poverty of life in England (not to mention the cold and the rain), and is possibly having a nervous breakdown. She is seriously considering moving us back to Pakistan permanently. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 13)

However, this path to a more solidified sense of identity also proves elusive when he visits the mosque and feels linguistically alienated. 'I shake my head miserably. I'm a foreigner in white, English society and I don't seem to fit into Pakistani society either.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 28) This sense of cultural purgatory is reinforced on a trip back to Pakistan. 'This causes me great concern. I imagine having to live in Pakistan, not just visit there. I can't read or write Urdu and I speak it clumsily, with an English accent.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 68) English as a language is then used by Ahmad to combat his sense of homelessness in order to consolidate an English

identity. 'My English language skills are outstanding and I look down on people with inferior accents. (This is my way of creating some self esteem, as a reaction to being abused as a sub-human being).' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 100) Ahmad actually assumes the role of the perfect Englishman in order to deflect and reverse the racial profiling that would otherwise exclude him from such an identity:

I develop a way of dealing with the racist lowlife in the school, with their gutter English and unkempt appearance. I become the perfect gentleman, superior to them in every way. They may be white, but I become whiter than white, quintessentially English. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 100)

An established English identity is something he believes he achieves by becoming a school prefect. 'In some ways, I feel that I have made it, become part of the establishment, integrated into the fabric of English society.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 128)

However, a growing sense of Otherness and difference begins to be attached to the entrance of religion into everyday life; it directly prevents him from being 'quintessentially English.' This is expressed in Ahmad's insecurity at the success of his amorous intentions for a white English girl:

I hope that my being a foreigner won't be an issue, but it does give me a sense of disadvantage, of inadequacy. I'm not sure how this process works, but I imagine that Patricia and I will get married one day. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 19)

Feelings of inadequacy are exacerbated by his increasing isolation at school, where kids refrain from sitting next to him and bully him during PE lessons for his different appearance. 'It is utterly humiliating. I am totally alone in every way; a foreigner, an outcast, a heathen. It is bad enough having to deal with the older boys ... but to have my own classmates turn against me is unbearable.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 71) Islam as a faith and an identity comes to represent an obstacle to what he cannot do or

achieve. This can be glimpsed when he states: ‘*oh, so that’s why I don’t eat pork! It’s because of religion.*’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 27) This is further articulated by Ahmad when he emphasises that certain restrictions existed in British society at the time that prevented Pakistanis from being viewed as normal, inclusive British citizens. ‘First, no one can imagine a television programme with a Pakistani man as the hero – that will never happen.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 22) Both Islam (as a code of ethics) and wider Western society (as represented by the media) are viewed as obstacles to his genuine integration within the body politic of British society.

Elizabeth Poole in her study *Reporting Islam* (2002), specifies the importance and impact of media reporting in the effects and relations between dominant and minority groups within Britain. ‘The media contribute to the material practices of discrimination through their discursive practices, which normalize attitudes toward problematised groups and then legitimate and prefer negative constraining actions above other fairer solutions.’ (Poole, *Reporting Islam*, 21) In regards to the media images Ahmad would have been exposed to as a child, Poole states that Orientalist discourse has been reformulated for the Muslim world, both in and outside of Britain; a textual and media attitude resulting from earlier Orientalisms. The ‘recent process[es] of globalisation and migration are creating new connections and with them new sensibilities requiring a reassessment of how the Orientalist discourse may have changed and adapted to this.’ (Poole, *Reporting Islam*, 29) The absence of media images regarding Islam and Muslims in Britain from the 1960s to the 1980s has increasingly been replaced by this reformulated Orientalist discourse that is explicitly centred on modern Islam. ‘Only a few stereotypes are offered. Muslims are homogenised as backward, irrational, unchanging, fundamentalist, misogynist, threatening, manipulative in the use of their faith for political and personal gain, and

yet with politically unstable governments and movements.’ (Poole, *Reporting Islam*, 18) Orientalism has had to adapt to a globalised world, where multicultural societies have complicated the pre-existing imperial realities. Imran Ahmad in *Unimagined* describes his experiences as an internal other within Britain and not as an external and undesirable (exotic) other that permeated classic Orientalism.

However, Ahmad does acknowledge the historical influences and textual constructions of Islam within the Western psyche. This is demonstrated at school where the fear of Islam, that has infused Western ideas of the Orient, is glimpsed through children’s books and stories:

The enemies of Narnia are from a country called Calormen, and these people look unmistakably like Saracens, medieval Muslims; the Narnians themselves look like crusaders. In wanting to identify with the characters, I am torn between a natural desire to be on the side of ‘good’, the white English children and a feeling that I am condemned to be in the other camp, the Calormenes, the darkies from Calormen (*coloured men?*) with their curved swords and spicy food and unmistakable Islamic cultural symbolism. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 29)

This textual symbolism and its incumbent Christian hegemony are further identified by Ahmad in his exchange with the Reverend Glynn-Jones. ‘He is not preaching; we are discussing *The Lion, the Witch, the Wardrobe* and its parallels to Christian theology. I never saw this before; I just thought it was a great story.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 57) The pseudo-religious imagery that Ahmad is exposed to at school, all emphasises the cultural and religious hegemony of Christianity through modern history. On the story of St George, Ahmad writes:

[The] story is virtually the same as our pantomime, and yet has been changed in a quite vulgar way. The message is completely different. Instead of unity, it’s about separation. Instead of equality, it’s about superiority. There is something strange about this school; it is subtly different from Hotham in a sinister way. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 53)

Dialogisms permeate the above synopsis in a manner that is directly analogous to the social design of classic Orientalism.

This dynamic of negative reporting directly affects the way in which Ahmad, on an everyday level, is able to navigate himself through British society. This again is felt within the confines of the school yard where he becomes the victim of racist bullying:

There is too much talk in the media and the gutter press about *immigrants*, who come over here and take people's jobs, or get unemployment benefits (or both). The lowlife need to focus on the threat of the *immigrants* in order to give themselves a feeling of superiority. So they focus on me. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 68)

Poole has stated that this form of racism towards Muslims has over time shifted from ethnicity to religion:

A dislike of Islam cannot be seen as the defining feature of hostility towards Muslims; it includes a complex mixture of xenophobia and racism. The supposed shift from skin colour to cultural practices as the 'ethnic signifier' has increased Muslims' visibility, given that being a Muslim often comprises an explicit projection of both. (Poole, *Reporting Islam*, 48)

Ahmad's memoir alludes to the increasing presence of media images that conflate racial specificity with cultural profiling.

Chris Allen has also argued that after anti-racist legislation of the early 1980s, racism began to adopt different forms in which to express itself as a discourse:

As a result, racist ideology began to focus upon issues of difference – more specifically, cultural and religious difference – in order to make hostile assertions about the same groups and communities as before but now in ways where their difference was presented as either unacceptable or incompatible with the norms of society.²²³

This form of ethnic specificity becomes an increasing reality for Ahmad as he graduates from school in London to University in Scotland. The cultural and racial bias of the media is questioned in the framing of the Other with regards to the Falklands war. 'I don't think that the 'Argies' (as the tabloids so easily fall into calling them – sounds too much like 'Pakis') are any less human than us.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 172) His movement from London to Stirling mirrors the increasing comfort he feels with his Muslim identity. It also demonstrates the consequent awareness that such an identity has become increasingly problematic. His confrontations with Orientalist attitudes also become more acute.

Before his scholastic migration to Scotland, Ahmad is confronted by two fellow pupils at his sixth form college who subscribe to a rigid and fundamentalist version of Christianity. In this respect Auden and Robinson assume the position of missionary Orientalists in their desire to convert Ahmad to Christianity. Ahmad recalls that:

Unexpectedly, they reveal themselves to be Christian fundamentalists. They talk about something called the 'Rapture', a miraculous event in the near future, when all Christian Believers will be literally lifted up to Heaven by God, with the rest of us *left behind* to suffer from horrible events here on Earth. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 131)

In their protestations to Ahmad, the two protagonists mirror the extreme ideologist stance that has in recent times been associated with Islamic fundamentalists. Ahmad becomes the victim of a religious extremism that generates suspicion and fear within him:

This is a strange, sinister, frightening Christianity they tell me of - not the Christianity I know and am fond of. They talk about biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled already, proving that others will also come to pass, and that the Rapture is a real event, which will surely happen soon. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 133)

The discourse of conflict and distrust that underpins Islamophobia is consciously reversed by Ahmad in his ideological and theological exchanges.

Islam as a doctrine and theology is questioned on the familiar grounds of its irrationality and unreason but also on the contemporary ideas of its aggression. These Oriental characteristics are spelt out to Ahmad when he writes that Auden and Robinson 'go on to make an attack on Islam, quoting Qur'anic verses supposedly urging Muslims to attack Christians and Jews. I am outraged but say nothing...' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 132) Both Auden and Robinson believe that a clash of civilisations is inevitable. Ahmad recalls:

I am completely taken aback by all of this. They are saying that peaceful coexistence is not an option; that we are destined to fight a horrible global war between Believers and non-Christians and that this is promised in the bible. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 133)

As the perceived sermon continues, Ahmad is actually intimidated by the professed erudition of Auden and Robinson, the mock Orientalists. 'Both Auden and Robinson are straight-A students in Science and Mathematics ... They are 'good' boys, cultured and well spoken; they never use bad language. I am intimidated by their intellects and unsettled by their faith.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 140) In response, Ahmad creates a pseudo process where the perceived strength of the religious (Christian) discourse relies on its position of power and is impressed onto the minority constituent through a dialogue that is anything but open and mutually understanding. The inequities of Orientalism are metaphorically glimpsed through these exchanges.

When Ahmad arrives in Stirling to begin his chemistry degree, the spectre of Orientalist Christianity seems to fade into the background. This, however, is short lived, as another figure of Christian fundamentalism enters his life:

An acquaintance of Milton is Magnus. I meet him one evening in Milton's room and we chat. He is a tall, bearded Christian evangelist who takes an immediate interest in me. (I found out much later that he has been on an American course in converting Muslims and has selected me as his field project). (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 157-58)

Again, it is Islam and Ahmad who are placed into the Orientalist framework; they need to be extricated from their religion and culture for their own benefit. The insidious nature of mono-culturalism is evident when Ahmad states: 'I've heard this before, and it comes as no surprise when Magnus asserts his view that the Qur'an is a deception of Satan, who deliberately created Islam to misguide as many people as possible away from the salvation of Christianity.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 159) Tahir Abbas has noted that this form of cultural homogenisation has become increasingly popular in contemporary times:

In recent expositions of a multicultural European identity, others have come to the conclusion that to be European is to be a Christian, Enlightened liberal who abides by Roman law, where the emphasis is on a return to a narrower multiculturally exclusive European identity. (Abbas, 'British Muslim Minorities Today,' 724)

Europe as a symbol of the Occident and its exclusive and collective (Christian) identity needs to be preserved against (Islamic) intrusion.

Imran Ahmad continues to delineate the idea that Orientalism as a discursive practice is active and resonant today, assuming new and old forms of enunciation. Islam as a faith is overtly attacked and discredited as a moral compass for life and salvation. 'Not only that I am coming to grips with the possibility that Islam isn't just misguided, it is in fact deliberately engineered by Satan to lead people away from salvation by Jesus, and to Hell.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 159-160) One trait that is unchanged and present in his religious discussions at university is the absolute conviction of his agitators, namely and chiefly Magnus. 'I have been placed in a state of extreme anxiety and I cannot shake it off. The worry persists. What really bothers

me is Magnus's *absolute* certainty that he is right.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 160) Ahmad elaborates on the absolute certainty of grand arching narratives (Orientalism, religious fundamentalism). 'Magnus and I discuss Islam and Christianity a lot. I am mesmerised by ... his absolute conviction. He is a compelling character, with a certain charisma; he carries himself with absolute self-confidence (*he would call it faith*).' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 182)

Ahmad ultimately rejects Christian conversion and thus can be viewed as a reverse Orientalist in his refusal to accept the integrating designs of fundamentalist discourses in the construction of his own reality. 'I can resist becoming Christian, because the theology doesn't seem fair.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 186) The identification between religion and discourse is also unconsciously betrayed. 'I launch into a long discourse on how I believe that God created Man by means of Evolution (which is what I believe is hinted at in the Qur'an).' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 189) In regards to the idea of the rapture, the Orientalist taxonomies of Islam/West and Occident/Orient are explicitly reversed:

I am deeply disturbed and scared by this account. This sort of thing does not happen in Islam, which is rational belief based on evidence, common sense and absolute trust in a remote and aloof God. We don't do *feelings*. I am afraid that if such a thing happened to me, I would be torn apart by the conflict between the cold logic of Islam, and the exhilarating emotional pull of Christianity. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 199)

Ahmad in his engagement with extreme forms of Christianity reassesses his own relationship with Islam, both culturally and as a faith.

Imran Ahmad begins to undermine the Orientalist and religious certainties of his religious agitators and interrogators. As an entity, the racial and cultural homogeneity of Islam in the eyes of the West is subtly attacked by Ahmad in his evocation of the internal division of the Islamic world:

There's a further complication about Islam that I learn about. Apparently there are two main sects; the Sunnis and Shias. Immediately after the Prophet's death, there was a dispute over who was the correct successor to be the leader ('Caliph') of all the Muslims. This dispute caused a fragmentation into these two sects. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 79)

The heterogeneity of the Islamic world is again emphasised in contrast to its definitions within Orientalist lexicons. 'And there's the further complication that both the Arabs and the Turks were Muslim, but they were fighting each other. Perhaps the world is not as simple a place as I would like it to be.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 116) Ahmad also reverses the paradigm of the progressive West and Islamic antiquity in their respective histories:

That was during the Golden Age of Islam. Whilst Europe languished in putrid medieval darkness, Islam was synonymous with civilisation, science, art, poetry, architecture, urban planning, bathing and clean underwear. Jews fled the pogroms in Europe and found guaranteed sanctuary and mutual respect in the Islamic world. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 85)

Islam is valorised for the benefits it can offer society and outside of Orientalist and contemporary fears about its extremist manifestations. 'I study Islam some more. So many Islamic rules are clearly for our own good...' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 229)

However, Ahmad is careful not to regurgitate the totalising structures of absolutist ideologies that he battles with throughout the memoir. This is illustrated in his rejection of the Islamist ideologies of Hakim:

He's always giving the sermon. And what he keeps saying does not strike me as Islamic at all. He never bothers to talk about love, peace, forgiveness and tolerance, he prefers to lecture on the hellish Afterlife that awaits those who don't believe and act as he does. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 238)

Islamism as an ideology is also avowedly disputed: 'It's all made-up garbage. None of it is in the Qur'an. This is ... a sickness; a lot of superstition and prejudice that has wrapped itself around Islam like a cancer. I feel very uncomfortable sitting here, listening to this nonsense.' (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 238) The refusal of Orientalists to

be self-critical is also at odds with his willingness to critique what he views to be the negative aspects of the Islamic world. On bonded labour, he exclaims that ‘this is totally un-Islamic, and yet Muslims are the worst offenders in this in supposedly Islamic countries like Pakistan.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 230)

With the help of Dr Miller, a Canadian and former Catholic Priest turned Muslim preacher, Ahmad formulates a defence against religious proselytising and certainty. Ahmad can be viewed to broaden out this defence against all discourses with hegemonic pretensions:

When you debate with a fundamentalist, they keep telling you what they believe, but they can’t be drawn into explaining why they believe it. Belief by itself is meaningless; it needs rational foundation ... There’s no shortage of belief systems in the world. They all have stories and explanations. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 242)

The totalising hermeneutics of Orientalism are eschewed by Ahmad in favour of a relativistic approach when appraising different religions and systems of belief (Orientalism/Islam):

When we choose a religion, we have an intellectual obligation to explain the phenomena, the miracles and events of *other* religions, within the framework of our chosen belief system. To not do so, to simply ignore other faiths, means we are not secure in our own beliefs, that these beliefs are not solid enough to face any challenges. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 226)

By making this declaration, Imran Ahmad can be viewed as an anti-Orientalist who objects to the refusal of Western Orientalism to understand, accept and incorporate the Other within its modes of operation. The Manichean oppositions of Islam/West and Orient/Occident are dialogisms that will only regurgitate mutual suspicion and fear; these polarities need to be challenged and deconstructed.

On encountering Faisal, a moderate Islamic scholar, Ahmad presents a more open and self-critiquing voice for Islam in Britain. Faisal can be viewed as

illustrating the manner in which all totemic structures are actually constituted by a variety of discourses that overlap and exist in tension. Thus, a monolithic form of Islam (or any grand design) is perceived as a contradiction presented without contradiction. ‘The discussion which he then leads is very interesting. He talks about many apparent Islamic beliefs and practices which have no true basis in Islam; they are actually local cultural traditions, which cause confusion about Islam.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 244) Ahmad, through the voice of Faisal, calls for Muslim communities to mediate with the West, in order to overcome forms of cultural intransigence that prevent religious and social harmony. ‘Faisal says that the cultural baggage and negative propaganda that have distorted Islam are the cause of the West’s suspicion and frequent hostility; much of this is the fault of Muslims themselves, for not representing their religion accurately.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 245)

These critiques of certain Islamic practices and places are not wholesale. Ahmad does not believe that being a Muslim and being British are mutually exclusive identities; he expresses a wish to be both Islamic and Western. ‘Although it does not always seem compatible with Islam, I love the heady freedom and excitement of the Western world, just as it is.’ (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 245) The West is valorised for its human rights and freedom and by implication his privileged place within it:

At least Britain and the West are committed to implement the highest ideals – personal freedom, social equality, human rights, justice – and are willing to struggle with the consequences of these. The extent of social progress in British society over the last few decades has been breathtaking. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 276)

Despite the presence of a refashioned hostility towards Islam, and the omnipresence of both secularism and Christianity, Ahmad outlines his realised position as a moderate, commensurable and integrated Muslim in Britain:

My parents have never been frightened, ignorant, fundamentalist puritans. My father has always been clean-shaven and my mother has never worn a *hijab*. It's true that I have faced some racism in my life, but it's nothing compared to what my parents had to endure. They just got on with life; they didn't have time for self pity. Given what they experienced in the 1960s, the possibility that their children would be able to integrate successfully into British society – with equal rights and opportunities to pursue success – was unimagined. (Ahmad, *Unimagined*, 275)

Despite the increasing presence of Orientalist polarities in contemporary society, I would stress that Ahmad's timely memoir demonstrates the ability of both minority and majority communities to coexist in a climate of acceptance that goes past standards of tolerance. It is only with the recognition of these realities, and the subsequent danger of their deconstruction, that the re-emergence of Orientalism can be overcome.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of my thesis I have attempted to demonstrate that Orientalism as a global discursive reality is a malleable, multiple and refashionable discourse that has successfully adapted to the shifting cultural (religious), geopolitical, and social structures of power over the last three hundred years. It is my affirmation that reverse Orientalism has also been a vital discursive and imaginative tool for minority and disadvantaged groups, within the local/global structures of power, to orient themselves through the shifting dynamics of global geopolitics that have encompassed colonialism, diasporas, imperialism, globalisation, multiculturalism and repackaged Orientalisms. In my formulation, reverse Orientalism has also been able to function as a manifold discourse; it could variously mimic, accede to and reject the totalising and homogenising traits of classic Orientalism and other hegemonic structures that sought to encase them within rigid social formations. My research on the manner in which hegemonic discourses could be reversed has highlighted something that has been generally overlooked by post-colonial critics, who have concentrated more on reactive approaches to counter-cultural debates than viewing them in a proactive and regenerative context. The assumed relations between power/knowledge, East/West, Orient/Occident could be questioned and reversed at micro levels within Britain as well as in India. These influences, if fully excavated, can provide foundations for a recognition of Britain as a relative co-construct across the Orientalist divide through a larger temporal process than has been previously studied.

In emphasising the malleability and pervasiveness of Orientalist discourse through history, one has to also acknowledge its relevance for contemporary social relations, both across the globe and within nation states that have been irrevocably altered due to the movements of peoples across the Orient/Occidental divide. Social reformations have been propelled by the fall of imperialisms and the reordered dictates of globalisation. The spectre of Orientalism still remains a significant presence in the discursive constructions of 'Orientals' who continue to be distinguished from the civility of the West. In the case of Islamophobia in the last chapter I have demonstrated that the Orientalist divide between East and West is now most potently symbolised by the perceived threat of Islam to the civil, cultural, religious and social structures of Western society. Cataclysmic events such as September 11th, the July 7th bombings in London and the fallout from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have all contributed to the present strength of neo-Orientalism as a discursive strategy in which to deal with them. The worlds of fiction and literature have not been immune from this re-orientation back toward a more stringent form of Orientalist discourse that perpetuates classic binaries between them (Oriental/Islamic/antiquated/threatening) and us (Western/modern/threatened).

Ziauddin Sardar has been a consistent critic of the modern Western writer's ability to deal effectively with the remnants and reformed logics of classic Orientalisms. The confrontation between America (The West) and Islam (The Orient), crystallised by the threat of terror and the curbing of civil liberties, is the primary terrain for a new era of Orientalism to form and multiply. Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie have been christened by Sardar as 'Blitcons,' who 'in their different styles ... approach and opinions define a coherent position. They are the vanguard of British literary neoconservatives.'²²⁴ Sardar states that the present global conflict

that pitches America in opposition to the Islamic world is the refiguring of a new dawn of arch Orientalism. I would agree with his summation to a degree that the narrative posturing of literary luminaries such as Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie has fuelled the Manichean dispositions of the Western episteme in their dealings with the Orient. 'Blitcon fiction is Orientalism for the 21st century, shifting the emphasis from the supremacy of the West in general to the supremacy of American ideas of freedom.' (Sardar, 'The Blitcon supremacists')

Following on from this idea, Sardar argues:

Turned to this end, the manipulative power of the literary imagination is nothing but spin. And such spin is simply hatred answering, mirroring and matching hatred. Like minds reach across intervening swaths of the world and, in their hatred, embrace each other. (Sardar, 'The Blitcon supremacists')

I would not draw direct parallels between the terrorist and the Blitcon writer but I would contest that fiction that pitches the imagination of the West against the unreason of the Islamic fundamentalist (Oriental) cannot on its own deal with the social and political conflicts that we are presently confronted with. The cultural, economic, political, religious and social machinations of this age-old conflict need to be viewed singularly and outside of these over-arching structures. In doing this we would not be caught in a bind of regurgitating classic Orientalist dialogisms that will continue to fuel distrust, hatred and conflict; Manichean oppositions that we all profess to confront and defeat. Islam, and the Orient as a whole, need to be viewed outside of classic Orientalist structures that are now beginning to be rebuilt with reinforced foundations.

My reading of Martin Amis's collection on Islam and the global 'War on Terror' has confirmed Sardar's suspicions of a reformed and virulent neo-Orientalism. In *The Second Plane* (2007), Amis continuously frames global politics

along an axis that fundamentally polarises Islam and the West. He views the events of September 11th as a defining moment of Oriental encroachment upon the Occident: an event that was to be prevented by Orientalism, implicitly caused by its defeat through the fall of imperialism and inversely facilitated by the resulting mechanisms of globalisation:

September 11 was a day of de-Enlightenment. Politics stood revealed as a veritable Walpurgis night of the irrational. And such old, old stuff. The conflicts we now face or fear involve opposed geographical arenas, but also opposed centuries or even millennia. It is a landscape of ferocious anachronisms: nuclear jihad on the Indian sub-continent; the medieval agonism of Islam; the Bronze Age blunderings of the Middle East. (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 13)

Amis, in his analysis of September 11th and its fallout, cannot help but lapse into a totemic distinction between the West and Islam. 'Thinking of the victims, the perpetrators, and the near future, I felt species grief, then species shame, then species fear.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 10) Species here can be read for civilisations. In setting up the mutually exclusive entities of the West and Islam, Amis traverses the textual world of both classic Orientalism and modern right wing fears of the Other in multicultural social polities.

These reconstituted Orientalisms begin with Amis's categorisation of the Muslim/Other as overly sexualised and libidinous. 'It is difficult to exaggerate the sexual invasiveness (in at least two senses) of the Islamic system, even among the figures we think of as moderate.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 65) Islamic culture is portrayed as insular and indifferent to progress. 'The stout self-sufficiency or, if you prefer, the extreme incuriosity of Islamic culture has been much remarked.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 79) The Islamist subsequently lacks in reason: 'we are not dealing in reasons because we are not dealing in reason.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 68)

Amis's Orientalist cataloguing ends with the ultimate denigration of the Islamist as fundamentally irrational. 'We should understand that the Islamists' hatred of America is as much abstract as historical, and irrationally abstract too; none of the usual things can be expected to appease it.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 63) Whereas the West is morally absolved from these vices it is also devoid of blame in its position of distrust in Muslim consciousness across both sides of the Orientalist divide. 'The West isn't being seductive, of course; all the West is being is attractive. But the Islamist's paranoia extends to a kind of thwarted narcissism.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 63) Amis is also at pains to emphasise the moral and intellectual superiority of the West. 'Our moral advantage, still vast and obvious, is not a liability, and we should strengthen and expand it. Like our dependence on reason, it is a strategic strength, and it shores up our legitimacy.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 75) The Orientalist desire to impose civility and order for the sake of the Orientals' needs is urged to be redeployed.

I would stress in my reading of Amis that the Blitcon writers are all too eager to universalise the threat of Islam as explicitly anti-Western; that it lacks the internal variances of Western culture. This can be particularly scrutinised in the manner in which Amis conflates general Islamic opinion with the social outlook of militant fundamentalism:

Well, the civil war appears to be over. And Islamism won it. The loser, moderate Islam, is always deceptively well represented on the level of the op-ed page and the public debate; elsewhere, it is supine and inaudible. We are not hearing from moderate Islam. Whereas Islamism, as a mover and shaper of world events, is pretty well all there is. (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 50)

His sporadic attempts to distinguish between them in *The Second Plane* lack strength and conviction. Thus Islam continues to be framed as antiquated and frozen in time

when compared to the West. Also, its development can only be viewed along a Western axis and not according to its own position within the world:

Socialism was a modernist, indeed a futurist, experiment, whereas militant fundamentalism is convulsed in a late-medieval phase of its evolution. We would have to sit through a Renaissance and a Reformation, and then await an Enlightenment. And we're not going to do that. (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 9)

Amis's conception of history can only be read out of an Orientalist's textbook.

As a consequence of this, Islamism is to be feared for its presence, its potential ascent within the West and the subsequent threat it would pose to both the civility and security of Western interests. 'Itself profoundly retrograde, Islamism may force retrogression on us all.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 159) Martin Amis ultimately calls for a new age of Orientalism and cultural intervention; the imperial project reconstituted. 'There is no momentum, in Islam, for a reformation. And there is no time, now, for a leisurely, slow-lob enlightenment. The necessary upheaval is a revolution – the liberation of women.' (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 88) Orientalist epistemologies, ontologies and ultimately the 'textual attitude' of Orientalism are shown to be residual and powerful motivations within Amis's narrative posturings in *The Second Plane*. However, I would argue that to allow such narrative constructions to become epistemic risks shaking the foundations of an integrated globalised world where multiculturalisms can flourish if left free from polarised dissections. I would call for the neo-Orientalism of Amis and others such as Samuel Huntington to also be reversed, where cultural and intellectual engagements with minority communities can emphasise amelioration, connections, co-constructions and enabling potentialities. Amis defines the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism as a 'massive agglutination of stock response, of clichés, of inherited and unexamined

formulations.’ (Amis, *The Second Plane*, 19) This can be reversed upon the logic of Orientalism and in Martin Amis’s case, neo-Orientalism.

The various writers and protagonists I have showcased in my thesis have demonstrated that the Orientalist divide, though alive and pervasive, can be challenged and deconstructed. Ian Almond in *The New Orientalists* (2007) has shown that Western or Westernised critical thinkers generally have been unable to think outside of the parameters of Western epistemologies, ontologies, critical traditions, and ultimately in my summation, Orientalisms. ‘The Islam of the writers and thinkers covered in ... [Almond’s book] remain ... invariably an Islam-for-others, an *Islam-pour-l’Occident*, an *Islam-Pour-l’Europe*, and never an *Islam-en-soi*, an Islam for itself.’ (Almond, *The New Orientalists*, 203) They have ultimately failed to take up the challenge to think comprehensively beyond Orientalist structures, and thus any representations of the Other frames both the Oriental and the Westerner according to age old constructions; the binaries remain. ‘Another inescapable point is that, for all its alterity, the representation of Islam in postmodern texts tells us more about post-modernity than it does about Islam.’ (Almond, *The New Orientalists*, 196) I would stress that my thesis has shown that such attempts are not only possible and exhibited through history but potentially subversive and nourishing for future cross-cultural relations, especially in regards to the present schism between Islam and the West.

The early travel writers to Britain showcased that the discourse of Orientalism, for so long viewed as a didactic monologue preached to and received by the Orient, was indeed a dialogical relationship which allowed for subaltern writers to compose counter cultural readings of the Occident. This included subversive

reactions to the imposition of imperialism and the subsequent colonial practices that it encompassed. All of this can be catalogued during a temporal period that has historically been neglected. I have shown that reverse Orientalism is not a recent phenomenon but a historical discourse that can be traced back through the last three hundred years, mirroring the chronological range of classic Orientalism. Textually, the forms of Orientalist writing could be utilised to compose counter cultural readings of the Empire both in the Orient and at the heart of the Occident. Autobiographies, diaries, letters, family histories and travelogues were all variously employed by the writers to demonstrate that textually at least; the Oriental could resist the hegemonic imposition of imperial attitudes and values whilst using the very discursive terrain within which it was framed. I have also demonstrated that this subversive co-option of Orientalist discourse conversely allowed the subaltern writer to retrain the gaze of normativity back upon the imperial centre. This again reinforces the malleable and dialogical essence of Orientalist discourse, both in its classic and reverse Orientalist dynamics. Further attempts could be made by expanded archival research on these early travellers to Britain in order to investigate the extent of co-option and dissidence in these early Orientalist engagements, both within India and Britain.

The historical depiction of the Orient as a feminine terrain in need of conquering by the masculine and assertive West is a classic assumption of Orientalist discourse. My work has demonstrated that not only were Western women active participators in the Colonial project but that Oriental women were also active agents in the reverse Orientalist response. Subaltern women were able to make the journey to the heart of the Empire and in doing so escape many of the Orientalist strictures that they have historically been associated with. Memorials of their time spent in

Britain also highlight the subversive possibilities of domestic histories; where the private sphere and the archive of personal memory can offer new understandings of colonialism as a socio-political structure, Orientalism as a discourse and feminism as a global construct within it. Subaltern women writing Occidental as well as Oriental history is a scholarly terrain that has been overlooked for too long and the exciting possibilities of archiving such endeavours need to be further explored and recorded for a greater understanding of colonial and post-colonial modernities to be reached.

Another era of modern British history that has historically neglected the presence of Orientals within Britain's social landscape has been the immediate pre- and post-war periods of the twentieth century. The Orientalist historical textbooks have sought to deny or have refused to archive the presence of Indian writers who actively engaged with the social effects and political ramifications of a tumultuous period of global history that impacted equally on both sides of the Orientalist divide. The two writers (Nirad Chaudhuri and Mulk Raj Anand) studied in chapter three demonstrate an intellectual engagement with artistic, cultural and literary concerns that were prevalent during this period in the Western episteme. Again, further research would be invaluable in unlocking the presence of Oriental writers' influence within and upon the critical and artistic traditions (such as Bloomsbury/modernism) of the West that have thus far been studied in an exclusively Occidental context.

In the closing sections of my thesis I have specified a particular strand of the Orientalist logic; the re-imposition in contemporary times of Islam and the Islamic world as the foremost terrain in need of Orientalist intervention. Ultimately it demonstrates the very arch of my argument and the strength of Orientalist discourse itself: that Orientalism has endured, is able to selectively adopt old forms, create new

ones and continue the indelible linkage between knowledge/representation and power. Reverse Orientalism in my summation has also demonstrated this textual dexterity in relation to the contemporary intransigent polarity between Islam and the West. Islamism can be figured as the ultimate form of reverse Orientalism but such an approach will only strengthen the binary distinctions between the Orient and the Occident. I have conversely showcased the ability of young Muslims to formulate counter-cultural responses to both the overarching historical and contemporary definitions placed upon them by Orientalism (Islamophobia) whilst also refuting the mimetic dogmatisms of Islamist ideologies.²²⁵

In conclusion, I would like to declare that the discourse of Orientalism, for so long viewed as a limiting structure for the Oriental and their Western offspring, needs to be reinterpreted as a multiple textual 'attitude.' It needs to be viewed as a discursive tool open to the Orient and the Occident, and most pertinent of all the hybrid individual of the post-colonial, postmodern and globalised world. I would call for the artistic, cultural and literary expression of the writers in this thesis to be viewed as evidence that Orientalist discourse could be utilised as a positive framework for cross-cultural discussion and representation. The reverse Orientalist dynamic can be placed into a regenerative context and this calls for a genuine paradigmatic shift when future generations of Orientals/Asians/Easterners are studied in regards to their place within the West and its position in relation to them. There are dangers in the continued escalation of such discursive possibilities that I do acknowledge above. This has been specified in regards to the rise of both Islamism and neo-Orientalist ideologies within Britain (and the West) that continue to pose problems to the genuine cohesion of social relations within Britain between majority and minority communities. But these can be overcome if the long history of

such communal engagements can be further emphasised as nourishing and vital for the benefit of future generations who will be confronted with social difference as an everyday reality in an increasingly globalised world. Discursive and textual acceptances of these differences are our best mechanisms against the further entrenchment of Orientalist polarities, and this applies to both sides of that historical divide wherever it may exist on the micro or macro level. As I have demonstrated in this thesis, such a practice is not only possible but evident and necessary. To reverse Orientalism is to acknowledge its potential for deconstruction and transformation.

Notes

Introduction

¹ Edward W. Said, Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. London: Routledge, 1978, 1-2.

² Benita Parry, Delusions and Discoveries: Studies On India In The British Imagination, 1880-1930. London: Allen Lane, 1972, 3.

³ P.J. Marshall, 'British Indian Connections c. 1780 to 1830: The Empire of the Officials.' In Michael J. Franklin, ed. Romantic Representations of British India. London: Routledge, 2006, 60.

⁴ Ronald Inden, Imagining India. London: Hurst & Co., 2000, 36.

⁵ Bernard Lewis, Islam and the West. New York: Oxford UP, 1994, 117-118.

⁶ Robert Irwin, For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies. London: Allen Lane, 2006, 150-166.

⁷ David Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773-1835. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, 178.

⁸ Radhakant Deb (1783-1867) was a Bengali reformer and cultural nationalist who dedicated his life to the preservation of orthodox Hinduism. He served as a Munshi under Lord Robert Clive and Warren Hastings for the East India Company in Bengal. Deb avowedly promoted elementary, female and English education among the Hindu population in Bengal. In collaboration with Ram Mohan Roy (1774 - 1833), he was instrumental in the establishment of the Calcutta Hindu College in 1817. Radhakant Deb was also elected president of the British Indian association upon its formation in 1851; a position he held until his death. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a founder of the Brahmo Sabha in 1828, which later became the Brahmo Samaj, an influential Indian socio-religious reform movement during the Bengal Renaissance. Roy also believed education to be a vital cognitive tool for social reform in Bengal and India. He founded the Vendanta College in 1826, which offered a syllabus that supported the synthesis of Western learning with Indian education.

⁹ Jenny Sharpe, 'The Violence of Light in the Land of Desire; Or, How William Jones Discovered India.' Boundary 2. 20. 1 (Spring, 1993): 28.

¹⁰ Aijaz Ahmed, In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures. (London: Verso, 1992), 182.

¹¹ Fred Dallmayr, Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996, 53.

¹² Richard King, Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'. London: Routledge, 1999, 79.

¹³ Michael Herbert Fisher's biography of Sake Dean Mahomed looks at both his life and writings: The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland, and England. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996. A different chronological sample of Indian writers can be found in Fisher's, Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004. Finally, for a wider sample of Commonwealth writers and texts from outside a specifically Anglo-Indian context see Catherine Lynette Innes, A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002.

For broader historical analyses of the Indian presence in Britain during these time periods see Rozina Visram, Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History. London: Pluto Press, 2002; Shompa Lahiri, Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

¹⁴ Sukhdev Sandhu, London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City. London: HarperCollins, 2003. This text gives a very nuanced and subversive reading in relation to the manner in which the imperial metropole (London) has been altered by the influence of Black and Asian writers over the last four centuries.

¹⁵ A. Flinn, 'Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges.' Journal of the Society of Archivists, 28 (2007): 160.

¹⁶ For some examples of the varied range of romantic Orientalist texts see: H. T. Colebrooke, Essays on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus. London: Williams and Norgate, 1858; Sir William Jones, The Works of Sir William Jones. Vol. 1. London, 1799. 6 vols., 1840-1848; F. Max Muller, India: What Can It Teach Us?. London: Longmans, Green, 1892.

¹⁷ James Mill, The History of British India. 4th ed. London: J. Madden. Other Anglicist texts include: John S. Mill, Collected Works: 30. Ed. John M. Robson. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1996; Thomas B. M. Macaulay, Macaulay's Speeches: A Selection: with His Minute on Indian Education. Ed. G. M. Young. New York: AMS Press, 1979.

¹⁸ Javed Majeed, Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's *The History of British India and Orientalism*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992, 128.

¹⁹ Hayden V. White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978, 50.

²⁰ The idea that Indians could dialogically engage with British administrators, in a mutually beneficial relationship, within colonial India is systematically attacked by

James Mill's, The History of British India, op. cit. Mill was a Scottish historian and political theorist whose convictions centred on Britain's credentials as an explicitly civilising force within India. His accounts of India were entirely framed within a Eurocentric world view and thus, his political theories allowed no scope for the fusion of Eastern and Western knowledges in the governance of colonial India. James Mill's colonial history consistently reflects this binary attitude.

The relative absence of Indians within British social histories (pre 1945) can be seen in the following: Edward Royle, Modern Britain: A Social History, 1750 - 1997. London: Arnold, 1997; Peter Clarke, Hope and Glory: Britain, 1900-1990. London: Penguin, 1997; John Davis, A History of Britain, 1885-1939. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999; T. O. Lloyd, Empire, Welfare State, Europe: The United Kingdom 1906-2001. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

²¹ Gayatri C. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds, The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. London: Routledge, 1995, 28.

²² Meyda Yegenoglu, Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading to Orientalism. Cambridge: UP, 1998, 26.

²³ For a broader analysis of gender representation in colonial discourse see Reina Lewis, Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation. Gender, racism, ethnicity. New York: Routledge, 1996. Also view her analysis of Orientalist discourse in relation to travel texts: Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers UP, 2004. Sara Mills has contested Said's relegation of Western women's travel writing to the personal sphere in chapter two of her study: Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. London: Routledge, 1991. See pages 57-63 for a specific critique of Said's lack of address to gender.

²⁴ Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography.' Comparative Studies in Society and History. 32.2 (1990): 386.

²⁵ Helen Tiffin, 'Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse.' In Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds, The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. London: Routledge, 1995, 97. For a wider conception of post-colonial studies as a body of resistance to colonial discourse read: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures. London: Routledge, 2002. The conclusion on pages 220-222 is especially concise and informative.

²⁶ Richard Terdiman, Discourse/counter-discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985, 36.

²⁷ Linda Hutcheon, 'Rhetoric and Competition: Academic Agonistics.' Common Knowledge, 9. 1 (Winter 2003): 48.

²⁸ For a concise genealogy of the term and the various ways it has been employed see Stephen Morton, Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Cambridge: Polity, 2007, 96-97.

²⁹ Gayatri C. Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography.' In Ranajit Guha and Gayatri C. Spivak, eds, Selected Subaltern Studies. New York: Oxford UP, 1988, 10.

³⁰ Gabriele Griffin, Research Methods for English Studies. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 5.

³¹ Alessandro Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History,' History Workshop. Vol. 12 (1981): 99.

³² Katherine Mayo, Mother India. Ed. Mrinalini Sinha. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.

³³ Cornelia Sorabji, India Calling: The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji. Ed. Elleke Boehmer and Naella Grew. Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2004; Cornelia Sorabji, India Recalled. London: Nisher & Co., Ltd, 1936.

³⁴ Reviews in the The Times can be obtained through this web address: 'The Times digital archive (1785-1985).' The Times. 15 Sept 2010. <<http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/>>

³⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. London: Routledge, 1992.

³⁶ James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1997.

³⁷ Richard Phillips, Sex, Politics and Empire: A Postcolonial Geography. Studies in imperialism. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006.

³⁸ British travelogues connected to the imperial enterprise include: Francis Hamilton Buchanan, Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar. 3 vols. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1807; George Valentia, Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt: In the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806. London: W. Miller, 1809.

³⁹ Mirza Sheikh I'tesamuddin, The Wonders of Vilayet: being the memoir, originally in Persian, of a visit to France and Britain. Trans. Kaiser Haq. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2002.

⁴⁰ Reginald Heber, Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825. 2 vols. London: J. Murray, 1844.

⁴¹ Sake Dean Mahomet, The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India. Ed. Michael Herbert Fisher. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

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- ⁴² Sake Dean Mahomed, Shampooing: Or, Benefits Resulting from the Used of the Indian Medicated Bath, As Introduced into This Country. Brighton: W. Fleet, 1838, vii.
- ⁴³ Abu Taleb Khan, Westward Bound: Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb. Trans. Charles Stewart. Ed. Mushirul Hasan. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005.
- ⁴⁴ Behramji M. Malabari, The Indian Eye on English Life or Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer. Bombay: Apollo Print Works, 1895.
- ⁴⁵ Sara Mills, Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism. London: Routledge, 1991.
- ⁴⁶ Sara Mills, Gender and Colonial Space, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005.
- ⁴⁷ Antoinette M. Burton, Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- ⁴⁸ Antoinette M. Burton, Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.
- ⁴⁹ Inderpal Grewal, Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1996.
- ⁵⁰ Pothum Ragaviah, Pictures of England: Translated from the Telegu. Edited by Pothum Janakummah Ragaviah ... Descriptive of Her Visit to Europe. Madras: Gantz Bros, 1876.
- ⁵¹ Janaki Agnes Penelope Majumdar, Family History. Ed. Antoinette M. Burton. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2003.
- ⁵² This lack of critical acknowledgement in regards to the Indian presence in Britain, is figured most effectively within this context by a variety of Bloomsbury histories. These include: Quentin Bell, Bloomsbury. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968; Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum, ed, The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary, and Criticism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975.
- ⁵³ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- ⁵⁴ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, A Passage to England. London: Macmillan, 1959.
- ⁵⁵ Mulk Raj Anand, Across the Black Waters. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 2000. This text was first published in 1940.
- ⁵⁶ Mulk Raj Anand, Conversations in Bloomsbury. Oxford India Paperbacks. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995. This text was first published in 1981.

⁵⁷ Jessica S. Berman, 'Comparative Colonialisms: Joyce, Anand, and the Question of Engagement.' Modernism/Modernity. 13.3 (2006): 482.

⁵⁸ Meary James Tambimuttu's: Out of This War: A Poem. London: Fortune Press, 1941, would provide a good starting point. Potentially, some of his other works also present a greater forum for analysis but are difficult to access: these include his prefaces, short stories, and scripts of talks.

⁵⁹ Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses. London: Viking, 1988.

⁶⁰ Salman Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991. London: Granta Books, 1991.

⁶¹ Salman Rushdie, Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002. New York: Random House, 2002.

⁶² Hanif Kureishi, The Word and the Bomb. London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

⁶³ Ed Husain, The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left. London: Penguin, 2007.

⁶⁴ Sarfraz Manzoor, Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock 'n' Roll. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

⁶⁵ Imran Ahmad, Unimagined: A Muslim Boy Meets the West. London: Aurum, 2007.

⁶⁶ Martin Amis, The Second Plane: September 11: Terror and Boredom. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008, conspicuously ignores this imbalance within its global analysis of relations between Islam and the West. Melanie Phillips makes no attempt to analyse the minority position of Islam within Britain in her critique of Islamism: Londonistan: How Britain Is Creating a Terror State Within. London: Gibson Square, 2006.

⁶⁷ Ziauddin Sardar, Orientalism. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999.

⁶⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Free, 2002.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Poole, Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims. London: I.B. Tauris, 2002.

⁷⁰ Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press; Some Salutory Lessons.' 1990. The Commission for Racial Equality. 28 October 2009. <<http://83.137.212.42/siteArchive/catalystmagazine/catalyst/The-Rushdie-Affair-and-the-British-Press.pdf> >

⁷¹ Edward W. Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

⁷² Bobby S. Sayyid, A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism. London: Zed Books, 2003.

⁷³ Bhikhu C. Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2000.

⁷⁴ Stuart Hall, 'New ethnicities.' In Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindenberg, eds, Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 169.

⁷⁵ Tariq Modood, Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

⁷⁶ Monica Ali, Brick Lane: A Novel. New York: Scribner, 2003.

⁷⁷ A recent example of Muslim non-fiction is Shelina Zahra Janmohamed, Love in a Headscarf: Muslim Woman Seeks the One. London: Aurum, 2009. An Australian novel has dealt with similar themes: Randa Abdel-Fattah, Does My Head Look Big in This?. New York: Orchard Books, 2007.

⁷⁸ Zadie Smith, White Teeth: A Novel. New York: Random House, 2000.

Chapter One – Early Journeys

⁷⁹ Rozina Visram, Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History. London: Pluto Press, 2002, 354. For further details also view Rozina Visram, Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700-1947. London: Pluto Press, 1986.

⁸⁰ Michael Herbert Fisher, Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, 1.

⁸¹ Michael Herbert Fisher, 'From India to England and Back: Early Indian Travel Narratives for Indian Readers.' Huntington Library Quarterly. 70. 1 (2007), 154.

⁸² George Viscount Valentia's, Voyages and Travels to India... (1809-Aristocratic Grand Tour), Reginald Heber's Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay (1827-Picturesque Modality) and Francis Buchanan's A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar (1807-Survey Modality) were just three famous examples in the early nineteenth century of the different ways Westerners engaged imaginatively with the Orient.

⁸³ Nigel Leask, Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'from an antique land.' Oxford UP, 2002, 173.

⁸⁴ Edward Said, Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. London: Routledge, 1978, 54.

⁸⁵ Tabish Khair, et al, eds. Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana UP, 2005, 7.

⁸⁶ The word ‘Vilayet’ is explained on page 10 of the text as the Indian term that denotes the West, or more specifically Britain and Europe. It is a loose definition for an area that was as much imagined as geographical, much like the term the ‘Orient’ came to signify the entire East in the Western episteme.

⁸⁷ Translation details and the variety of forms the text has taken have been obtained from Kaiser Haq’s excellent introduction in the highlighted publication. Pages 13 to 15 offer a detailed history of the journey the text has taken into modern print. The first publication translated into English by John Edward Alexander was entitled Shigurf Namah - I – Vilaet or excellent intelligence concerning Europe, being the travels of Mirza Itesa Modeen. Kaiser Haq has stated that this translation was heavily flawed and abridged, and thus decided to adapt his own version from the Bengali text, as opposed to the Persian source material. His own knowledge of Persian was deemed insufficient to successfully attempt a scholarly translation of the original manuscript.

⁸⁸ Kaiser Haq has garnered the requisite information from a privately printed family history of the Sheikh’s as compiled by one of his descendants. The Mirza’s elder brother was a mufti (Legal Adviser in Islamic law) to Nawab Alivardi Khan who was the independent ruler of Bengal from 1740 to 1756. More details can be found on page 9 of Haq’s introduction to the text.

⁸⁹ The title Mirza is roughly equivalent to that of a knighthood, an honour which demonstrates his elite status within pre-colonial Bengal. He acted as a courtier and diplomat between the Mughal establishment and the rapidly increasing and powerful East India Company.

⁹⁰ The term Firinghee refers again in a general sense to anybody who derives from the West, with particular reference to the English and Britain. In later colonial times it came to be associated with the mixed race Anglo-Indian population that resided in India that was deemed neither completely British or Indian.

⁹¹ First published in 1771, this Orientalist text has been subject to a series of amendments and editions. I have consulted and referenced William Jones, A Grammar of the Persian Language. London: Printed by W. Bulmer and Co. for Lackington, Allen and co. [etc.], 1804.

⁹² Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2007, 360.

⁹³ Partha Chatterjee, ‘Five Hundred Years of Fear and Love.’ Economic and Political Weekly. 33. 22 (1998): 1335.

⁹⁴ Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, 1.

⁹⁵ Anthony Giddens, Modernity and Self-Identity. Cambridge: Polity, 1991, 15.

⁹⁶ Rana Kabbani, Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient. London: Pandora, 1994, 21. To view a detailed description of the manner in which the West mythologised the Orient into a sexual terrain see pages 14-36.

⁹⁷ Michael H. Fisher, 'From India to England and Back: Early Indian Travel Narratives for Indian Readers.' Huntington Library Quarterly. 70.1 (2007): 163.

⁹⁸ See pages 95-103 of the memoir for a more detailed debate between I'tesamuddin and his patrons regarding the differences in religious disposition. The different roles of Jesus, Gabriel and the Prophet Mohammed are discussed in relation to the Christian and Islamic traditions.

⁹⁹ 'Dean Mahomet's youth in Bihar (1759-69).' In The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India. By Dean Mahomed. Ed. M. H. Fisher. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, 15-16.

Muslim families like Mahomed's were an important component of the Company's army and administration, particularly in the upper ranks of Indians; however, they were always below Europeans. In the Bengal Army over the period that Dean Mahomed chronicled, Muslims consistently composed nearly half of the higher Indian officer corps, about two-fifths of the lower Indian officers, and about one-third of the sepoys, far in excess of their minority proportion of the general population (roughly one quarter).

¹⁰⁰ Michael Herbert Fisher and Sake Dean Mahomet, The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland, and England. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996, 120.

¹⁰¹ Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994, 52.

¹⁰² Tony Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire. New York: Palgrave, 2002, 15.

¹⁰³ For further reading on this issue see Tabish Khair *Other Routes* (2005) p 26. Khair has argued that the 'divestment of scientific and philosophical value that earlier African and Asian travel writing was experiencing in most European quarters, and the presence of an impetus towards the colonial centre, rather than the colonized margins, affected Asian and African travel writing in one profound manner: it failed to consolidate its earlier versions into a distinct genre and, from the nineteenth century onwards, largely based itself on European models.'

¹⁰⁴ For further detailed ethnographic descriptions of Muslims see: The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India letter 13 and for Hindus on letter 18.

¹⁰⁵ For further reading and insight into the contribution of slave narratives as counter histories and reverse discourses of Orientalism in reference to their South Asian counterparts view Sukhdev Sandhu's London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City. London: HarperCollins, 2003, chapters 1 and 2. Another good

introduction to writers such as Equiano and Sancho and their relationship to South Asian writers such as Dean Mahomed is Catherine Lynette Innes's, A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002, pages 17-56.

¹⁰⁶ Catherine Lynette Innes, A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000, op. cit. 46-48.

¹⁰⁷ Kate Teltscher, 'The Shampooing Surgeon and the Persian Prince: Two Indians in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain.' Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies. 2.3 (2000): 409-423. (see also Fisher, *First Indian Author*, 227-33 for detailed description of the different appropriations, elisions and ideas that are translated into Mahomed's own work)

¹⁰⁸ Tejaswini Niranjana, Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

¹⁰⁹ Susan Bassnett, 'Writing And Translating.' In Susan Bassnett and Peter R. Bush, eds, The Translator As Writer. London: Continuum, 2006.

¹¹⁰ To view this memorial: 'Carlton house memorial.' 29 Sept 2005. UkinIndia.org. 24 Jan 2008. <<http://www.ukinindia.org/magazines/britaintoday/BTInnerpage>>

¹¹¹ Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984, 141-144.

¹¹² All subsequent references to *Shampooing* will be taken from Sake Dean Mahomed's, Shampooing: Or, Benefits Resulting from the Used of the Indian Medicated Bath, As Introduced into This Country. Brighton: W. Fleet, 1838.

¹¹³ Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man.' In The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994, 89.

¹¹⁴ Michael Herbert Fisher, 'The World of Brighton.' In The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey Through India. By Dean Mahomed. Ed. M. H. Fisher. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, 153-154.

¹¹⁵ Amitav Ghosh, Foreword, Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing. Ed. Tabish Khair, et al. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana UP, 2005, ix.

¹¹⁶ Tabish Khair, 'Abu Taleb in Africa and Europe,' Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing. Ed. Tabish Khair, et al. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana UP, 2005, 327.

As well as Mirza I'tesamuddin, Munshi Ismail (1772) and Mir Muhammad Husain (1776) wrote from within this Indo-Persian tradition.

¹¹⁷ Michael H. Fisher, 'Representing "his" Women: Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's 1801 "Vindication of the Liberties of Asiatic Women."' Huntington Library Quarterly. 70. 1 (March 2007): 216.

¹¹⁸ For explication see Westward Bound chapter 20, p155. Taleb offers the following criticisms as explicit evidence of the fallibility of British society and the foibles at the heart of British culture. The list stands as an overt critique of Orientalist pretensions of superiority but also signify a confidence and subjectivity that allowed the colonised to reclassify the hierarchies of Orientalist dogma.

1. Lack of Pride
2. Pride or insolence
3. Acquisitiveness
4. Love of ease
5. Irritability of temper
6. Wasting time in sleep, eating and dressing
7. Love of luxury
8. Assumption of expertise in foreign languages and science
9. Selfishness
10. Want of chastity
11. Profligacy
12. Contempt for other cultures and customs.

¹¹⁹ Kenneth Ballhatchet, Race, Sex, and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980. 121.

¹²⁰ Ronald Hyam, Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990. 2.

¹²¹ Kenneth Ballhatchet, Race, Sex, and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.

¹²² Text taken from a rare poem called: 'Masnavi: Poem in Praise of Miss Julia Burrell.' The only copy of the poem resides at the British Library with slight extracts and a title page missing. I have quoted in the text from Kate Teltscher, 'The Shampooing Surgeon,' op. cit, 420.

¹²³ Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto, 1986, 63.

¹²⁴ Simonti Sen, Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives, 1870-1910. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005, 7. Sen argues that Euro-imperial notions of travel enabled the colonised to often counter deploy them in ways that would crucially challenge Western claims to cultural superiority. Almost all of the typical romantic motifs, such as an aestheticised nature, a critical attitude towards industrialised culture, a nostalgic longing for the past ... were deployed in the narratives of ... [the Indian] travellers to articulate their modern Indian selves in opposition to their European Others.

¹²⁵ Antoinette M. Burton, At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 170.

¹²⁶ For a concise description of the legal challenges developed by purity movements in Britain during the late nineteenth century see Ronald Hyam, op. cit, 64-71.

¹²⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things. Durham: Duke UP, 1995, 11.

¹²⁸ Jonathan Raban, Soft City. London: Collins Harvill, 1988.

¹²⁹ Antoinette Burton, 'Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian travellers in Fin-De-Siecle London.' History Workshop Journal. 42 (Autumn 1996): 132.

Chapter Two – Women Travellers

¹³⁰ Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds, Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992, 9.

¹³¹ Antoinette Burton, 'The White Woman's Burden British Feminists and "The Indian Woman,"' 1865-1915. In Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds, Western Women and Imperialism, op. cit, 137.

¹³² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "'Race,' Writing, and Difference.' Critical Inquiry, 12. 1 (Autumn, 1985), 243.

¹³³ Fanny Parkes, Begums, Thugs and White Mughals. Ed. William Dalrymple. London: Sickle Moon Books, 2002. William Dalrymple's heavily edited edition argues that Parkes figures as a female traveller who sought to coalesce British and Indian cultures in a dynamic of hybridity that has not been historically associated with the early 'White Mughal' period, as Dalrymple himself has rephrased the early colonial period.

¹³⁴ William Dalrymple, Introduction, Begums, Thugs and White Mughals. By Fanny Parkes. Ed. Dalrymple. London: Sickle Moon Books, 2002, v-xix.

Dalrymple has rejected scholarly attempts to place Parkes's travelogue within Said's conception of it as an Orientalist account of the Orient; he refutes its place within the Orientalist project. I do agree in part with his assessment of the text that it is not a typical account of Indian 'backwardness and antiquity' as her contemporaries such as Emily and Fanny Eden constituted. Parkes's text does exhibit admiration for Indian customs and India as a whole but only within the political structure that colonialism represented. She does not offer an alternative paradigm, for example Indian autonomy, and her readership would have been British, both public administrators and private businessmen alike. Thus, a connection between her writing and British power would be highly difficult to deny.

¹³⁵ Fanny Parkes, Wanderings of a Pilgrim in search of the Picturesque, During four and twenty years in the East: with Revelations of Life in the Zenana. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1999, 18.

¹³⁶ Nancy L. Paxton, 'Complicity and Resistance in the Writings of Flora Annie Steel and Annie Besant.' In Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds, Western Women and Imperialism, op. cit, 174.

¹³⁷ See Foucault, The History of Sexuality. Pages 17-35; regarding sexual discourses and their facilitation of social structuring.

¹³⁸ Indira Ghose, Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998, 94.

¹³⁹ For a detailed analysis of sexuality in Flora Annie Steel's literary corpus see Indrani Sen, Woman and Empire: Representations in the Writings of British India, 1858-1900. London: Sangam, 2002, 139-149.

¹⁴⁰ Flora Annie Steel was a prolific writer on her return to England, producing over a dozen texts of fiction, mostly romances, several of which were set and based in India. She also wrote a text on Indian cookery called The Complete Indian Housekeeper & Cook... (1898), two histories of India entitled India (1905) and India Through the Ages: A Popular and Picturesque History of Hindustan (1909) and The Garden of Fidelity (1929), an autobiography based on her time both in India and England. The following publications are her short story collection In the Permanent Way and Other Stories (1897) and a selection of her fiction: The Potter's Thumb: A Novel (1894); The Flower of Forgiveness (1894); Red Rowans [a Love Story] (1895); A Tourist Ticket (1895). For a full list of her published works see Janet M. Todd, ed., Dictionary of British Women Writers. London: Routledge, 1989.

¹⁴¹ Flora Annie Webster Steel, On the Face of the Waters: A Tale of the Mutiny. New York: Macmillan Co, 1897, 172.

¹⁴² Flora Annie Webster Steel, The Garden of Fidelity: Being the Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel, 1847-1929. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1929, 252.

¹⁴³ Flora Annie Webster Steel, From the Five Rivers. London: W. Heinemann, 1901, 14.

¹⁴⁴ Pothum Ragaviah's journey to Britain has largely been hidden and autobiographical information regarding her motivations for making the journey to Britain and her life in India are scant. Her motives for travelling to the West in my thesis are expressed solely in her travelogue. Throughout the travel narrative, she exhibits an awareness of the increasingly intertwined nature of East and West as a consequence of Empire and the rise of modernity within India. One example of this, is her wish to visit Manchester 'to see the working of the mills' which were then a subject of great interest to India for its own development. Her narrative is co-opted within a discourse that strives to understand the Occident and its effect on the Orient.

¹⁴⁵ Mary Carpenter (1807-77) was a British Unitarian who became passionately concerned about the plight and social welfare of women in India. She was the daughter of Dr Lant Carpenter, a distinguished minister of the large Unitarian congregation in Bristol, England. For a more detailed, specific and subjective view on the relationship between lady patrons of the Raj in India see Mary Carpenter, Six

Months in India. London: Heinemann Educational, 1976.

Lady Waterlow (nee Margaret Hamilton) (1849-1931) was a Californian society heiress who married the baronet Sir Sydney Waterlow who also became the Lord Mayor of London. No biography exists for Lady Waterlow but one can consult her husband's biography for some idea of how their philanthropy was coordinated. See George Washburn Smalley, The Life of Sir Sydney H. Waterlow, Bart by George Smalley. London: E. Arnold, 1909.

¹⁴⁶ Suparna Gooptu, "Cornelia Sorabji 1866-1954: A woman's biography." Diss. Oxford U, 1997, 96-97. Suparna Gooptu's biography of Sorabji's life in India and Britain is an excellent resource charting Sorabji's life as a legal officer in India, her political outlook, her credentials as a feminist and her imperial sympathies. Although my work has used her PhD thesis for reference, the full and completed text has now been published: Suparna Gooptu, Cornelia Sorabji: India's Pioneer Woman Lawyer. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Contemporary reviews of Sorabji's work in the British media were sparse and this may be attributed to the fact that she was explicitly viewed as a subaltern female with little new insight to offer that had not already been provided by Western women.

¹⁴⁸ George Valentine was the teacher and mentor of Sorabji's father Richard, and Cornelia Ford was the wife of Sir Francis Ford, a British Military officer. For a full profile of her parents and their British influences see: "Therefore": An Impression of Sorabji Kharsedji Langrana and His Wife Franscina. London: Oxford UP, 1924. The text does not bear her name but it is acknowledged as her memoir for her parents and their British mentors in India Calling on page 11.

¹⁴⁹ Nilufer Bharucha, 'Recalling Cornelia Sorabji: Plural Identities in colonial spaces and nationalist times.' In Avadhesh K. Singh, ed. Discourse of Resistance in the Colonial Period. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005, 144.

¹⁵⁰ Antoinette Burton, "'The Purdahnashin in Her Setting': Colonial Modernity and the Zenana in Cornelia Sorabji's Memoirs.' Feminist Review. 65. 1 (2000), 154.

¹⁵¹ Sukanya Banerjee, 'Empire, Nation, and the Professional Citizen: Reading Cornelia Sorabji's India Calling.' Prose Studies - London. 28. 3 (2006), 306.

¹⁵² Mrinalini Sinha, 'Gender in the critiques of Colonialism and Nationalism: Locating the "Indian Woman."' In Joan Wallach Scott, ed, Feminism and History. New York: Oxford UP, 1996, 498.

¹⁵³ Cornelia Sorabji's public address found in Antoinette M. Burton's, At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 150.

¹⁵⁴ Pallavi Rastogi, 'The World Around and the World Afar All Seemed Compassed: Cosmopolitan Ethnicity in the Victorian Metropolis.' Women's Studies. 32.6 (2003): 737.

¹⁵⁵ Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia UP, 1988, 44.

¹⁵⁶ Antoinette M. Burton, "'Stray Thoughts of an Indian Girl" by Cornelia Sorabji.' Indian Journal of Gender Studies. 3. 2 (1996): 252.

¹⁵⁷ To ascertain a greater understanding of the manner in which the text was composed by Majumdar and subsequently unearthed and published by Antoinette Burton see chapter one in Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India. Op. Cit. 4-5.

¹⁵⁸ For further biographical details of W.C. Bonnerjee's life and work see Sadhona Bonnerjee, Life of W.C. Bonnerjee: First President of the Indian National Congress. Calcutta: Bhowanipore Press, 1944.

¹⁵⁹ Janaki Majumdar was the youngest of seven siblings, the oldest of which was Kamal Krishna Shelley (Shelley), born on March 5th 1870. A year later, Janaki's oldest sister, Nalini Heloise (Nellie), was born on July 16th 1871. Susila Anila (Susie) was born on October 22nd 1872. Saral Krishna Keats (Kittie) was born on 2nd October 1879. Pramila Florence (Millie) was born on January 5th 1881. A fourth son Ratna Krishna Curran (Teenie) was born on 28th July 1883. In 1878 Hemanini had a baby boy who was stillborn.

¹⁶⁰ Alison Blunt, Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 24.

¹⁶¹ Partha Chatterjee, 'Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India.' American Ethnologist. 16. 4 (1989): 629.

¹⁶² For a nuanced and insightful look at the stratification and negotiation of public and private space within the gendered space of Colonialism see chapter four in Mills, Gender and Colonial Space, op. cit, 114.

¹⁶³ Robert Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race. London: Routledge, 1995, 27.

¹⁶⁴ Angela Woolacott, Rev. of 'Women Writing History.' Journal of Women's History. 17. 3 (2005): 186.

¹⁶⁵ Antoinette M. Burton, Introduction, Family History. By Janaki Agnes Penelope Majumdar. Ed. Burton. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2003, xxv.

¹⁶⁶ Caren Kaplan, Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1996, 181.

¹⁶⁷ Michael Schudson, 'Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory.' In Daniel L. Schacter and Joseph T. Coyle, eds, Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1995, 348.

¹⁶⁸ For further reading on the narrative reconstructions of home and its co-constructions through both personal and collective memory see Catherine Wiley and Fiona R. Barnes, eds, Homemaking: Women Writers and the Politics and Poetics of Home. New York: Garland Pub., 1996. Also, consult Rosemary Marangoly George, The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. For a comprehensive study on how recollections of the past can be distorted both individually and collectively read Daniel L. Schacter and Joseph T. Coyle, eds, Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1995.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West. London: Routledge, 1990, 22.

Chapter Three – The Inter- and Post-War Settlement

¹⁷⁰ William Walsh, ed, Readings in Commonwealth Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, 32.

¹⁷¹ For further details of Chaudhuri's life both before and after the publication of his autobiography in 1953 see Paul C. Verghese, Nirad C. Chaudhuri. Indian Writers series, 2. London: Arnold-Heinemann, 1973, and Chetan Karnani, Nirad C. Chaudhuri. Boston: Twayne, 1980.

¹⁷² Amit Chaudhuri, 'Poles of Recovery: From Dutt to Chaudhuri.' Interventions - London 4 (2002): 101.

¹⁷³ Chaudhuri's alienation from the majority of the Bengal intelligentsia can be explained in a variety of ways, one of which was the fact that he wrote explicitly with a Western reader in mind. This was compounded by the choice of English as his language of enunciation. Amit Chaudhuri has stated that at the time Chaudhuri began writing it was 'exceptional, for a Bengali to embark upon a literary project, major or minor, in anything but his own tongue; at the time, the Bengali language was, for the Bengali writer, the legitimate vehicle for cosmopolitan, middle-class expression.' Amit Chaudhuri, op. cit, 99. Linguistic and generic models aside, the most significant factor behind his artistic disenfranchisement in Bengal was his perceived unequivocal endorsement of the imperial project in India.

¹⁷⁴ Pallavi Rastogi, 'Timeless England Will Remain Hanging in the Air.' Prose Studies. 28. 3 (2006): 320.

¹⁷⁵ Ruvani Ranasinha, South Asian Writers in Twentieth-Century Britain: Culture in Translation. Oxford English monographs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007, 87.

¹⁷⁶ Sudesh Mishra, 'The Two Chaudhuris: Historical Witness and Pseudo-Historian.' The Journal of Commonwealth Literature. 23. 1 (1988): 8.

¹⁷⁷ M. K. Naik, A History of Indian English Literature. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, 266.

¹⁷⁸ Bruce Robbins, 'Actually existing Cosmopolitanism.' In Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds, Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, 1.

¹⁷⁹ Rastogi defines her idea of cosmo-cosmopolitanism as a world picture anchored to a profusion of attachments rather than to an evasion of human, political and national anchorage, and also refuses to subscribe to imperial modes of perception that view Europe as the centre of the world and the colonies as its antipodal Other.

¹⁸⁰ K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Sterling Publ, 1985, 591.

¹⁸¹ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, The East is East and the West is West. Comp. Dhruva N. Chaudhuri. Calcutta, India: Mitra & Ghosh, 1996, 89.

¹⁸² For a nuanced analysis of Englishness and its mediations with and through imperialism see Ian Baucom, Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999, 6-12. The introduction provides a general analysis of and attempt to specifically locate English identity. Chapter five, in particular, concentrates on its post imperial dimensions.

¹⁸³ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Why I Mourn for England. Comp. Dhruva N. Chaudhuri. Calcutta: Mitra & Ghosh, 1998, 14.

¹⁸⁴ Both Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan are not focused on in this chapter because their fiction is specifically centred on the Empire within India.

¹⁸⁵ Suresht Renjen Bald, 'Politics of a Revolutionary Elite: A Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.' Modern Asian Studies. (8: 4) 1974, 486.

¹⁸⁶ K. D. Verma, The Indian Imagination: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, 84.

¹⁸⁷ Kristin Bluemel, 'Mulk Raj Anand's Passage through Bloomsbury.' 07 July 2006. Working Papers on the Web. 10 May 2009.
<<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/thirties/thirties%20bluemel.html>>

¹⁸⁸ Mulk Raj Anand, 'The Making of an Indian English Novel.' In Maggie Butcher, ed. The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English. London: Commonwealth Institute, 1983, 38.

¹⁸⁹ Susheila Nasta, 'Between Bloomsbury, Gandhi and transcultural modernities: The publication and reception of Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable.' In Robert Fraser and Mary Hammond, eds. Books Without Borders. Vol. 2. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2008, 167.

¹⁹⁰ G. Thirupathi Kumar, Conceptualizing Tradition: A Study of Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. New Delhi: Research India Press, 2007, 149.

¹⁹¹ Kristin Bluemel, 'Casualty of War, Casualty of Empire: Mulk Raj Anand in England.' In Shafquat Towheed, ed, New Readings in the Literature of British India: 1780-1947. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2007, 324.

¹⁹² See page 142 in Conversations in Bloomsbury for explication of Anand's desire to rewrite English according to the dictates of his mother tongue. He rejects the idea of writing explicit English on the premise that it was incapable of rendering the intricacies and cultural particularities of Indian life, even under the rule of British Imperialism. He writes: 'I would have liked to play about with words like Joyce in such a way that, where no English words could communicate our feelings, I could introduce vibrations as speech, never mind if the English didn't understand.'

¹⁹³ Quentin Bell, Bloomsbury. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968, 23. The Oxford English Dictionary also gives a definition of the Bloomsbury group in what otherwise has been a contested classification.

¹⁹⁴ Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum, ed, The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary, and Criticism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, ii.

¹⁹⁵ Amit Chaudhuri, D.H. Lawrence and 'difference'. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, 131-32.

¹⁹⁶ David Gervais, Literary Englands: Versions of "Englishness" in modern writing. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge UP, 1993, 89.

¹⁹⁷ Dimitri Mirsky, 'The Bloomsbury Intelligentsia.' In Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum, ed, The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary, and Criticism. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, 384.

¹⁹⁸ Bonamy Dobrée was born on February 2nd 1891 and died on September 3rd 1974. He was a famous and respected academic who specialised in eighteenth century literature. Dobrée was a professor of English Literature at the University of Leeds from 1936 to 1955. His most significant work was his edited collection on the early eighteenth Century in the Oxford History of English Literature (1945). His general scholarship was focused within this area. He also wrote a novel, a play, and poetry.

¹⁹⁹ Pallavi Rastogi and Jocelyn Fenton Stitt, Before Windrush: Recovering an Asian and Black Literary Heritage Within Britain. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, 9.

²⁰⁰ For further reading on the layered and unstable nature of oral histories that Anand is essentially relaying in the *Conversations*, view Alessandro Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre.' In Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, eds, Narrative and Genre. London: Routledge, 2000, 23-45. Also see Alessandro Portelli, 'What makes oral history different.' In Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds, The Oral History Reader. London: Routledge, 1998, 63-74. For a deeper understanding of the palimpsest quality of historical recollections read Trevor Lummis, 'Structure and

validity in oral evidence.’ In Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds, The Oral History Reader. London: Routledge, 1998, 273-283.

²⁰¹ For a detailed look at Eliot’s work and worldview see Allen Tate, T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work. New York: Delacorte Press, 1966.

²⁰² Allama (scholar) Sir Muhammad Iqbal was born on November 9th, 1877. He was a Persian and Urdu poet, philosopher and politician born in Sialkot, Punjab, British India (now part of Pakistan). For a modern detailed biography of Iqbal see Ziauddin Ahmad, Allama Muhammad Iqbal: poet, philosopher, statesman and reformer. Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 2006.

²⁰³ David Slater, Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial: Rethinking North-South Relations. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 27.

²⁰⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture. London: Routledge, 1994, 35-36.

Chapter Four – Modern Islam: The New Age of Orientalism

²⁰⁵ Salman Rushdie, Midnight’s Children. Eastbourne: Gardners Books, 2004.

²⁰⁶ Salman Rushdie, Shame: A Novel. New York: Picador, 1997.

²⁰⁷ Ian Almond, ‘Mullahs, Mystics, Moderates and Moghuls: The Many Islams of Salman Rushdie.’ ELH: English Literary History. 70. 4 (2003): 1143.

²⁰⁸ A. Majid, ‘Can the Postcolonial Critic Speak? Orientalism and the Rushdie Affair.’ Cultural Critique. 32 (1995): 13.

²⁰⁹ Peter Van Der Veer, ‘South Asian Islam in Britain.’ Ethnicities. 4. 1 (2004): 136.

²¹⁰ Hanif Kureishi, My Beautiful Laundrette: and, The Rainbow Sign. London: Faber and Faber, 1986, 24.

²¹¹ A full definition of Islamophobia can be found in Runnymede Trust, and Gordon Conway, Islamophobia, a Challenge for Us All: Report of the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. London: Runnymede Trust, 1997.

²¹² Gabriele Marranci, ‘Multiculturalism, Islam and the clash of civilisations theory: rethinking Islamophobia.’ Culture and Religion. 5. 1 (2004): 109.

²¹³ Gholam Khiabany, ‘De-Westernizing Media Theory, or Reverse Orientalism: “Islamic Communication” as Theorized by Hamid Mowlana.’ Media, Culture & Society. 25. 3 (2003): 416.

²¹⁴ The first chapter of Ziauddin Sardar's *Orientalism* acts as a brief but concise history of the way in which Islam has acted as the primary lens for both Western ideas of itself as inherently superior and civilised, and also the way in which the image of Islam was refracted and then imposed on the rest of the great civilisations of the East: China, India and Japan.

²¹⁵ My definitions of moderate Islam in the thesis, much like Orientalist discourse itself, are varied and need to be specified for the particular contexts in which they exist and are utilised for effect. In this respect 'moderate' Islam is used to indicate the idea that first generation immigrants were traditional observers of Islam but sought to separate their faiths from the public sphere. They maintained South Asian forms of lifestyle (this could be displayed sartorially) and worship in private but were also willing to deviate from these 'norms' in public to integrate within British society. This form of 'moderate Islam' is distinguished for its ability to adapt between the public and private spheres of life within the West. Husain at this junction contravenes this religious idiom by his deliberate refusal to distinguish between the two. His disavowal of 'moderate Islam' is defined by the politicisation of his faith, both in its theology and practice.

²¹⁶ Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) was a Muslim writer and religious / political leader in the Indian subcontinent. He was the founder of and figurehead for the Jamat-e-Islami (The Islamic Society); an Islamic fundamentalist political party established in Lahore in 1941. The organisation became a major presence in Pakistani national politics after the Partition in 1947. For a detailed biography and analysis of his political and religious ideology see Roy Jackson, Mawlana Mawdudi and Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State. London: Routledge, 2008.

²¹⁷ Tahir Abbas, 'British Muslim Minorities Today: Challenges and Opportunities to Europeanism, Multiculturalism and Islamism.' Sociology Compass 1/2. (2007): 726.

²¹⁸ Paul Gilroy, Between Camps: Race, Identity and Nationalism at the End of the Colour Line. London: Allen Lane, 2000, 99.

²¹⁹ For a nuanced understanding of secular multiculturalism see Pathik Pathak, The Future of Multicultural Britain: Confronting the Progressive Dilemma. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008.

²²⁰ Ziauddin Sardar, 'To lionise former extremists feeds anti-Muslim prejudice.' 24 April 2008. The Guardian. 1 October 2009.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/apr/24/islam.religion>

Ziauddin Sardar explains that the danger in lauding former extremists and Islamists fuels the attractiveness of such ideologies and conversely the further marginalisation of Muslim youth. He persuasively states that 'the answer is the messenger and the message. When erstwhile sinners gain the limelight, the support of neocon luminaries and the backing of respectable Muslim leaders, sinning acquires a certain cachet. We prove again that radical extremism is the way to get attention. We make flirtation with violent ideology the way to be heard and become acceptable.'

Sardar also decries the increasingly prevalent paradigm in the West that demands a good Muslim in the West to be apolitical. He states that Muslims in Britain have a variety of social problems that need political solutions in themselves as well as their extremist manifestations. To explicitly depoliticise Muslim peoples in the West, in order to combat extremism, can only lead to its rise in Sardar's formulation.

²²¹ The second definition of moderate Islam offered here counterpoints with the experience of Ed Husain in his earlier memoir. Manzoor's 'moderate Islam' is in essence a modern Westernised form of faith, one that operates between the polarities of traditional/Pakistani Islam of his parents' generation and that of the social values of a multicultural and secular Britain. This moderation at first puts him in conflict with the wishes of his 'traditional' parents who believe his private (and public) practice of faith contravenes their cultural and religious values that he should also adhere to. This form of 'moderate Islam' is seen by his parents as explicit Westernisation and negative.

Manzoor can also be defined as 'moderate' in social terms, for his co-option within modern, multicultural and Western modes of life. His forms of lifestyle and worship contrast with that of his parents, both in the public and private sphere, however, they also distinguish him from the Islamic radicalism adopted and then rejected by Ed Husain in *The Islamist*. Conversely, his memoir can be viewed as a timely reminder that Islamism as a discursive practice has not silenced the voices of Muslim Britons who seek placation between their religious and social (Western) identities; where one does not have to relegate the other to the periphery. Manzoor's form of 'moderate Islam' is distinguished by its desire and ability to resist binary labels and polarised futures within British society.

²²² A. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 2003, 41.

²²³ Chris Allen, 'From Race to Religion: the New Face of Discrimination.' In Tahir Abbas, ed, *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*. London: Zed Books, 2005, 51.

Conclusion

²²⁴ For the unedited version of this article see Ziauddin Sardar, 'The Blitcon supremacists: Amis, Rushdie and McEwan are using their celebrity status to push a neocon agenda.' 11 December 2006. *The New Statesman*. 1 February 2010. <<http://www.newstatesman.com/200612110045> 01/02/10>

²²⁵ The fourth chapter, which explicitly focuses on an new era of Orientalism in regards to Islam and Islamophobia, does not include a comprehensive analysis of female writers, and the reasons for this are two fold. The first is methodological as the generic forms of my study are non-fictional. This explains why I have not included Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) in my discussion. Secondly, the omission

of Yasmin Alibhai Brown's No Place like Home (1995) for example can also be explained by the fact that her memoir generally focuses on broader identity issues and her Ugandan African roots. The neo-Orientalist debates surrounding her place in Britain as a Muslim woman are only partially explored and thus her text was not consonant with my aims for the chapter.

I do acknowledge however, that new writings from Muslim women in Britain are now emerging and should be the subject of new studies in the future where they can be analysed both individually and collectively. This body of work can then be read in relation to the issues dealt with in my chapter regarding Islam, Islamophobia and neo-Orientalism.

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